

Galg Vg

V E R S E S

ON

VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

John Taylor

" I LEFT NO CALLING FOR THIS IDLE TRADE."

LONDON:

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TO MRS. ROBINSON.

DEAR MADAM,

IT is not because you have paid so very flattering a tribute to my professional character, as to dedicate to me one of your most beautiful Poems, that I am induced to lay the following trifles at your feet. I am too sensible of the merit of that Poem, to make so inadequate a return. My object on this occasion, is at least to tender my thanks, and to indulge myself in the pleasure of boasting that I have for many years enjoyed the friendship of one of the most accomplished women of the present age.

I am,

Dear Madam,

*Jan. 1795.
Hatton-Garden.*

Your sincere Friend,

JOHN TAYLOR.

TO MR. ROBINSON

DEAR MR. ROBINSON

I have just received your letter of the 11th inst. in relation to the proposed sale of the land in the town of ... I am sorry to hear that you are not satisfied with the price offered for the land. I have been advised that the price is the best that can be obtained for the land at this time. I have also been advised that the land is of great value and that it is well situated for the proposed use. I have also been advised that the land is of great value and that it is well situated for the proposed use.

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Very respectfully,
J. M. ...

ADVERTISEMENT.

MOST of the following trifles were written some years ago, and several of them have passed before the public eye. Of those previously published, is the article entitled *The Stage*, which appeared before Mrs. SIDDONS displayed her great talents in a London Theatre. Several of the Performers therein mentioned, are no more, but the Writer will not defraud the dead of praise that he once ventured to bestow. It was his intention to give distinct portraits of each Performer, but the nature of the subject rendered it very difficult to avoid great similarity of description, and indeed identity of language; he was therefore obliged to touch more generally upon those characters which are now introduced, and this must be his apology for not having noticed other Performers at present on the Stage, who deserve the praise of a better critic than he can pretend to be. Whether this work is worth the trouble of putting together, the Public are to determine; but if he had trusted to his own judgment, he should have decided the question in the negative.

THE

THE STAGE.

WHEN CHURCHILL's daring muse, a hardy dame,
With judgment clear, and true poetic flame,
First sung the merits of the scenic throng,
The "*well-trod Stage*" was worthy of her song.
O'er rival bards the tow'ring genius rose,
And lash'd with equal rigour friends and foes.
A GARRICK's excellence engag'd his lays,
And claim'd the fairest wreath of critic praise.
A QUIN sustain'd the spirit of the Stage
With flowing humour, or heroic rage ;
A melting BARRY, in each tender part
Sent ev'ry accent to the trembling heart :
A PRITCHARD and a CIBBER charm'd the town,
Or with the comic wile or lofty frown ;
And long for all shall bloom the laurels of renown.

If now the Theatre has lost the name
Once proudly sounded by the trump of fame,

ACTORS there are who still deserve her care,
 And still her verdant honors justly wear ;
 Who move in "*scepter'd pall*" with tragic pride,
 Or laughter force to *hold her aching side* ;
 And whose united pow'rs still form the Stage
 A clear and faithful mirror of the age.
 These let us view, and leave the meaner throng,
 Unhurt by notice, still to creep along.

High on the comic roll, see KING appear,
 To nature constant, and to critics dear ;
 He, led by reason, with a steady gaze
 Observes mankind, and as he sees, he plays.
 No wanton whim e'er tempts his mind astray,
 More than his author's meaning to convey,
 But with the text the faithful actor moves,
 And the best comment on the poet proves.

The testy moods that mark declining life,
 The froward jealousy, and peevish strife,
 How well he shews, his *Teazle* may proclaim,
 Where bard and actor share a mingled fame.

How joys the bosom, when we chance to find
 True force of genius with a worthy mind ;
 A gen'rous transport o'er the fancy glows—
 The ready verse with honest ardour flows.

Then

Then KING ! accept this tribute, from a muse
 Lur'd by no partial ends or sordid views,
 Who, pleas'd to greet thee on thy public art,
 Turns with a nobler zeal to note thy heart,
 That heart which all the manlier virtues claim,
 And baffled malice knows not how to blame.

Loose as the wind, and feebler than the sand,
 Are all the fairy fabrics Hope has plan'd,
 When, on the favour of a changeful town,
 She fondly seeks for permanent renown.
 When HENDERSON first sought this critic ground,
 His talents rais'd deserv'd applause around ;
 Stern judgment, satisfied, decreed the bays,
 And sympathy bestow'd its noblest praise.
 But lo ! transferr'd to awful Drury's* soil,
 Where once true merit could not vainly toil,
 The public mark of ev'ry puny wight
 Who in these letter'd times aspires to write,
 He feels the ranc'rous stroke—in fame decays,
 And, strange reverse, to empty benches plays,

* Mr. HENDERSON's first appearance in London, was at the Hay-market theatre, during the summer season, in the time of the elder COLMAN.

Though truth must own, since, sunk in endless night,
 The great theatric orb withdrew its light,
 None various life like HENDERSON has view'd,
 And GARRICK's radiant track like him pursu'd.

But though, in justice to a slighted name,
 The town's absurd caprice we freely blame,
 Too well we know, perfection's tow'ring height
 Has ne'er since GARRICK charm'd the wond'ring sight,
 And ev'ry living candidate for praise,
 Would dimly gleam by his effulgent blaze.

Here with thy gossip-tale Digression rest,
 And hence comparison's unfriendly test ;
 The muse with candour shall maintain her state,
 And judge each cause by its own proper weight.

Of HENDERSON it fairly may be said,
 Th' heroic canvas he should seldom spread,
 For though his judgment, uniformly true,
 Draws a chaste outline to the critic view,
 Too oft is wanting, to complete the part,
 That vivid col'ring which secures the heart.

In injur'd *Lear*, when he attempts to shew
 The manly workings of majestic woe,
 The driv'ling monarch whimpers o'er the stage
 In dotard weakness or in childish rage.

Yet

Yet though in tragedy we sometimes find
 But a faint sketch of what the bard design'd,
 None should behold his *Hamlet*, and delay
 The honest meed of warm applause to pay.
 But when he joins Thalia's chearful band,
 The heart at once impels th' applauding hand ;
Falstaff and *Benedick* alone must raise,
 And amply justify, the loudest praise.

Though justice should alone direct the lays,
 The muse with pleasure tunes her voice to praise,
 Invok'd by genius, she delighted sings,
 And strikes with eager joy the trembling strings.
 But when stern truth his awful brow displays,
 And bids her quit the flow'ry path of praise,
 The cold injunction damps her sprightly song,
 And the slow verse reluctant drags along.

SMITH, held so long a fav'rite with the town,
 May smile securely at the critic's frown :
 Though on this ground must rest his claim to praise—
 He seems the gentleman whate'er he plays :
 In ev'ry character, we always find
 The genuine traces of a cultur'd mind.

His attitudes are always form'd with grace,
 While ev'ry limb assumes its proper place ;

But

But yet, if candour may her thoughts declare,
 They seem too much the objects of his care.
 Oft, when a striking gesture he can find,
 The stream of passion dully creeps behind,
 And, slighting all that feeling should bestow,
 He tries his form in happiest lights to shew.

Thus, when the murd'rous King should thrill with fright,
 As *Banquo*'s vision meets his guilty sight,
 Though ev'ry nerve, mechanically true,
 From habit startles at the horrid view,
 The mind itself seems perfectly at ease,
 Or doubting only if the start will please,

But the chief blemish that obstructs his claim
 To the fair honours of theatric fame,
 Is a loud, sharp, unmodulating voice,
 Where kindred tones admit no varying choice ;
 All in one key his Thane will "*murder sleep*,"
 His *Hotspur* menace, and *Castalio* weep.

The poor monotonist, whate'er his art,
 Can hope but seldom to assail the heart ;
 Each passion claims its own peculiar tone,
 But he must give them all with one alone :
 The lover's softness, and the tyrant's ire,
 With diff'rent feelings diff'rent notes require ;

But

But in one strain his *Bajazet* must rage,
And tender *Romeo* languish o'er the stage.

Then SMITH, though judgment always he displays,
Should chiefly build on comedy for praise,
For the gay elegance of polish'd life
Needs fewer tones than passion's mingled strife.
And if the muse, who means not to offend,
May speak her honest dictates like a friend,
Still should he revel with the sprightly train,
And seldom venture on the tragic plain.

The just demand of vet'ran worth to pay,
On YATES with friendly eye we turn the lay.
A favor'd vot'ry of the laughing fair,
Blest with true humour in no common share,
His talents, known and valu'd by the town,
Bear the just stamp of merited renown.

In parts where nature unrestrain'd is seen,
Which ask no striking form or polish'd mien,
Where the blunt rustic, or the wealthy cit,
A waggish ribaldry obtrude for wit,
Where'er the poet leans to vulgar life—
The saucy freedom and the drunken strife—
The pow'rs of YATES appear in boldest view,
With varying skill to varying humours true,

Free from those paltry tricks applause to raise,
 By which low minds obtain disgraceful praise,
 His acting, built on judgment's solid plan,
 Presents a just similitude of man.

Early by GARRICK tutor'd for the stage,
 And form'd for pathos, dignity and rage,
 As his great master said, in Ross we find,
 Some of the "*good old stuff*" still left behind.

When old *Sciolto*, anxious to repair
 His honour, stain'd by the repentant fair,
 Gives the dread poignard to his daughter's hand,
 Yet feels too much to speak his dire command ;
 Shews how the rigid judge dissolves away
 With the warm force of the parental ray,
 Ross strikes each finer fibre of the heart
 With native force beyond the poet's art.

When grief-torn *Lear*, with sharpest anger wild,
 Calls Heaven's dread vengeance on his thankless child,
 The hapless father's rage so well he draws,
 That pity, fear, and horror, speak applause.

When the poor injur'd King regains his state,
 Turns to old *Kent*, the tidings to relate,
 And, wild with joy, proclaims *Cordelia* Queen,
 Such happy energy pervades his mien,

Such

Such mingled transport, fondness and surprize,
That ev'ry eye the lucid praise supplies.

DIGGES, the fam'd Roscius of a sister-soil,
Destin'd for humbler honors here to toil,
By long experience has been taught the art
To rouse the strongest feelings of the heart ;
Though some quaint manners of the older school,
With uncouth stiffness, o'er his acting rule,
Though oft a local dialect we hear,
And tones that harshly greet the nicer ear.

In moral parts of the severer kind,
Which scorn each common weakness of the mind,
And act on stubborn reason's strictest plan,
DIGGES, with stern dignity, appears the man.

His *Cato* seems with Roman force to feel
The awful energy of patriot zeal,
And, in his *Caratach*, we still behold
All the rough virtue of our sires of old ;
That rugged majesty, sublimely rude,
Which once distinguish'd British fortitude.

But *Wolsey* is his master-piece—he there
Displays his author with the happiest care :
The prosp'rous prelate's elevated crest,
The fawning rev'rence with his royal guest,

And meek submission in his abject state,
He shews with skill pre-eminently great.

But why should Man at proud precedence aim,
When Female Worth can boast an equal claim?
The muse shall here the partial law disdain,
Impos'd by Custom, arrogant and vain.

Now must the heart a tender terror feel,
Lest from the rigid road it softly steal,
Prove the sweet influence female charms can raise,
And only wanton in the path of praise.
Yet may we nobly spurn the idle fear,
Lest partial eulogy alone appear,
If the fair suitors candid truth surveys,
The equitable verdict must be praise.

See then where YATES majestic soars along,
A theme that claims the muse's noblest song.
By Nature fashion'd in a lavish hour,
The peerless produce of her wond'rous pow'r.
Though time has touch'd her beauties with decay,
Yet who can still unmov'd her form survey;
Still must the eager eye delighted gaze
On the decline of that transcendant blaze.

And

And yet, whate'er her matchless form can boast,
Th' impressive actress claims our praises most ;
For who like her, in pathos or in rage,
With equal pow'r can realize the Stage ?

When her torn bosom with repentance swells,
As wretched *Shore's* unhappy tale she tells,
The glist'ning anguish starts in ev'ry eye,
And the rapt croud re-echo ev'ry sigh.

Or when *Medea's* wrongs employ the scene,
And the mind speaks through her disorder'd mien,
Her hearers catch at once congenial pain,
Whilst ev'ry accent fires the mad'ning brain,
And all, in unison with her despair,
See not the actress but the woman there.

Envy, who sickens at her tow'ring fame,
Says 'tis her greatest merit to *declaim* ;
But view her, sland'rer, with unjaundic'd sight,
And thy own breast shall soon refute the spite,

Now *CRAWFORD* comes, once partner of a name
With rapture sounded by enamour'd fame—
Melodious *BARRY*, whose seducing strain
Could touch the sternest breast with tend'rest pain :
Still faithful mem'ry hears th' entrancing flow
That sweetly warbled *Romeo's* melting woe ;

Beholds e'en now his agonizing *Lear*,
 And fondly drops the tribute of a tear.
 The idol of the fair—the stage's pride—
 With his mellifluous notes the lover dy'd.

But let the muse restrain her wand'ring flight,
 And CRAWFORD's worth impartially recite.

In sudden bursts of animated grief,
 Where the sharp anguish seems to scorn relief,
 At once she rushes on the trembling heart,
 And rivals Nature with resistless art.

Thus when, with *Randolph's* keen maternal pain,
 She listens wildly to the hoary swain,
 Whose artless feelings tenderly relate
 The wat'ry dangers of the infant's fate—
 “*Was he alive?*” transpierces ev'ry soul—
 From ev'ry eye the gushing plaudits roll.

But in the lengthen'd tale of plaintive woe,
 Or declamation's calm and equal flow,
 Her native excellence but faintly gleams—
 Too rapid now, and now too faint she seems,

In patient *Shore* she cramps her potent art,
 And seldom finds a passage to the heart ;
 But when *Alicia's* phrensy she displays,
 And her eyes, wild, on fancy'd spectres gaze,

A kindred

A kindred horror tears the lab'ring mind,
And the whole breast is to her pow'r resign'd.

In parts of gentle anguish though she fails,
Yet where tumultuous energy prevails,
Where wrongs inflame, or madness storms the mind,
Superior skill we must not hope to find.
Should we confine to tragedy her praise,
The niggard eulogy would stain the lays,
Since in her comic parts she still must please,
With nature, spirit, elegance and ease.
But as her potent force we chiefly find
In scenes that fire and agonize the mind,
The tragic muse may boast the highest claim,
And in her train enroll her CRAWFORD's name.

With various requisites the stage to grace,
A striking figure and a marking face,
A mien commanding, spirited, and free,
See POPE* to fame assert a solid plea,
And fairly claim, in these declining days
Of scenic worth, the tributary praise.

Her pow'rs though strong, but rarely should aspire
Beyond the sphere of haughtiness and fire ;

* Mrs. POPE.

Where

Where Love appears without his gentle train,
And join'd with pride, resentment and disdain.

Thus in *Hermione* her efforts show
A bold conception of heroic woe ;
While various passions in her breast engage,
Hope with despair contending, love with rage,
She ably draws from Passion's genuine source,
Expressing all with dignity and force.

A mirthful mischief sporting in her air,
Lo ! ABINGTON, Thalia's fav'rite care,
Design'd the path of higher life to tread,
To nature faithful, and by genius led,
With arch vivacity, the comic throne
She claims, and shines with lustre all her own.

Where affectation's flippant airs are seen—
The mincing accent, and the study'd mien,
Where art prevails o'er nature's simple grace,
And fashion's whims preside in reason's place,
The coldest critic must with pleasure view,
And own each portrait spirited and true.

In scenes where sharp sarcastic strokes appear,
With satire's keenest barb she points the sneer ;
Thus when gay *Millamant*, with bant'ring vein
Marwood insults in pity's galling strain,

Th'

Th' ironic tone such stinging force conveys,
That CONGREVE scarcely merits higher praise.

But though she thus can charm the critic sight
In parts affected, sprightly and polite,
The wild simplicity of hoyden youth
She paints with all the glowing tints of truth.

The muse who knows that HARTLEY could controul
And sooth to sympathy the sternest soul,
Can ne'er forgetful of her worth remain,
But seeks her name to decorate the strain.

In ROWE's fine portrait of submissive woe,
That contrite yields to fate's relentless blow,
The wretched victim of a lawless flame,
By pow'rs harsh mandate doom'd to public shame,
What eye to HARTLEY could a tear deny ?
What breast so hard that could refuse a sigh ?

Urg'd by the noblest glow of filial fire,
When poor *Cordelia* seeks her injur'd Sire—
Or warm with conscious honor's purest aim,
When *Desdemona* vindicates her fame,
Her plaintive strains would make a stoic feel,
Such magic graces o'er the bosom steal.

Again, sweet exile, grace a drooping Stage,
Again with nature's loveliest charms engage.

Lo!

Lo! CRAWFORD wanders to another clime,
 And YATES too soon must feel the stealth of time ;
 Then shall we own the triumph only thine,
 Where dignity and tenderness combine,
 In ev'ry gentle and impressive part
 With pow'r resistless to enchain the heart.

To thee, when YATES shall court the private shade,
 The sorrowing muse must fondly seek for aid,
 By thee alone, dear wand'rer, then display
 The melting force of her pathetic lay.

With ev'ry careless grace of sprightly ease,
 Secure, while nature can delight, to please,
 The sportive CARGILL revels o'er the scene,
 Love in her eye and frolic in her mien.
 By no ambitious impulse e'er betray'd,
 And scorning affectation's vain parade,
 She skims along where genius points the way,
 Simple at once and arch, correct and gay.

Where'er the bard a character supplies,
 Which no stiff airs of high-bred art disguise,
 Where the quick graces spring from feelings warm,
 That fire the eyes and animate the form,
 The lovely Syren soars beyond his art,
 And speaks the vivid language of the heart.

Though

Though nature starts at that fantastic rage,
The vile transform of sexes on the stage,
Such varying excellence in her we meet,
As almost sanctions the absurd conceit.

Yet CARGILL throw this dang'rous skill aside,
And let thy sway o'er man content thy pride ;
Oh ! turn not such delusive pow'rs to vex,
With love's resistless snares, thy hapless sex.

FARREN, with talents that have rais'd her name,
High on the records of theatric fame,
Of affectation fatally the slave,
Too oft perverts what bounteous nature gave.
E'en where a bard has this lov'd folly try'd
With some *outré* resemblance to deride,
Too oft her manners far transcend the part,
And mock the feebler effort of his art.

Yet was she form'd each softer care to move,
To image tender truth and gen'rous love,
To bid the sympathizing sorrows flow
With plaintive charm of mild domestic woe,
Though from the serious muse she long has stray'd,
And fondly revels with the comic maid.

'Tis hers to sport with airy ease along,
And hold the glass to fashion's giddy throng,

Reflect each foible of the flutt'ring race,
And paint their virtues with an heighten'd grace.

Next POPE *, a vot'ry of the sportive maid,
From nature's source deriving potent aid,
Comes laughing forward, conscious of renown,
And sure of favour from a partial town.

For humour's sprightly province though design'd,
Her pow'rs to narrow limits are confin'd ;
Unblest with requisites for polish'd scenes,
To lower life her genius chiefly leans.
Where city-pride with upstart pertness tries,
In sprightly ease, its coarseness to disguise,
All the mock elegance in POPE we meet
Of fine Cheapside, or solid Lombard-street.
Thus in *Miss Sterling*, she presents to view
A finish'd proof of what the author drew.

But when she fondly labours to appear
With the nice breeding of a higher sphere,
In HOADLEY's lively scenes aspires to please,
With all the polish'd grace of genuine ease,
Clarinda's manners lost, she seems no more
Than *Abigail* in what her mistress wore ;

* Miss POPE.

The vain attempt with pity we survey,
And grieve that pride should talents thus betray.

Here let the muse repress th' unfriendly aim,
Nor dwell on so much worth with churlish blame—
POPE copies life with truth, if not with grace,
And rears her fame on merit's solid base.

But where, alas ! can gentle KEMBLE * stray,
Whose modest worth may well adorn the lay,
She who must critic spleen at once disarm,
With sweet simplicity's resistless charm ?
Ah ! why thus doom'd to wander from the place
That best can feel her soft and touching grace ;
Why from that scene thus strangely forc'd to roam,
Where genius fondly seeks a fav'rite home ?

Not form'd to wield the terrors of the stage,
To burn with proud *Alicia's* mad'ning rage,
Or with *Macbeth's* ambitious partner swell,
Invoking horrors from the pow'rs of hell ;
Hers is the gentler empire o'er the mind,
The pensive, the pathetic, and the kind :—
'Tis hers with softest charms the breast to move
In drooping anguish and in plaintive love ;

* Mrs. STEPHEN KEMBLE.

Where sweet *Ophelia* meets with wild disdain,
 Or senseless wanders for a father slain ;
 Where *Desdemona* meekly would assuage
 The poor abus'd *Othello's* causeless rage ;
 Or *Juliet* fondly tempts her love to stay,
 And doubts the tuneful harbinger of day.

Ask we the spell by which she wakes the sigh,
 And calls the flowing sorrow to the eye ?—
 'Tis pow'rful nature's all-prevailing sway,
 And KEMBLE acts as feeling points the way :
 When, through the finer workings of the soul,
 A temper'd fervour animates the whole,
 We nature's strong presiding influence find,
 And trace the virtues of a kindred mind ;
 'Tis nature prompts her looks, her tones, her tears,
 And tells the heart, she is what she appears.

If sprightly MATTOCKS was not form'd to trace
 The finish'd elegance of comic grace,
 What humour means she ably can express,
 And put on manners as she puts on dress.

With skill she shews the vulgar city wife,
 Whose test of spirit is incessant strife ;
 Or sportive females of a higher race,
 Whose boist'rous airs their rank and sex disgrace ;

Or

Or where the widow, with a mournful eye,
Her recent loss would prudently supply,
And, while she whimpers for her *poor dead dear*,
The smile of hope illumines the labour'd tear.

Sometimes, perchance, too stately and too prim,
When she should seem all merriment and whim ;
Sometimes, too anxious to express with force,
Her col'ring, we allow, is hard and coarse ;
But all her characters are well design'd,
Form'd on the certain ground-work of the mind.
Beneath the veil of manners she can pry,
And trace the passions with a thinking eye ;
She takes her portraits from the passing throng,
With judgment solid, and with humour strong.

JORDAN advances with so proud a name,
That censure sinks beneath th' o'erwhelming fame.
To truth and reason we shall always bow,
But fashion's edicts dare to disallow,
And though we own her merit, still decline
With boundless homage to approach her shrine.

Nor shall we rashly join a partial crowd,
Who in their worship arrogantly loud,
And, caught by novelty's bewild'ring blaze,
Abandon those who well deserve their praise.

But

But here with candour shall we briefly try
 To hold her portrait to the public eye ;
 And JORDAN, sure, with nobler pride would feel
 Appropriate praise, than shouts of blund'ring zeal,
 Possessing tones mellifluous and clear,
 That sooth the passions as they please the ear,
 In *Viola* she sweetly "*told her love*,"
 And with the charm of tenderness could move ;
 Yet then perversely the insensate crowd
 Her genuine merit sparingly allow'd.

Had JORDAN still retain'd the plaintive part,
 The ready muse would fondly hail her art,
 Nor court less eagerly the pensive hour
 Than all her happiest wiles of comic pow'r.

The wanton *hoyden*, and intriguing wife,
 She copies with a faithful eye to life ;
 The *abigail*, familiar, pert and sly,
 A quick contrivance in her roguish eye ;
 The lively damsel, taking male attire,
 A harmless waggery her chief desire ;
 And in a lower walk—as *Jobson's* dame—
 In all on solid grounds she rear'd her fame ;
 In all a sterling excellence displays,
 And gladly we accord with gen'ral praise.

Her

Her talents thus, in fairest light appear,
And JORDAN stands without a rival here.

But though for comedy so well design'd,
Not aptly train'd for gaiety refin'd ;
And hence in *Rosalind* she fail'd to trace
The intellectual mirth and courtly grace.
True, she is arch, but in her archness coarse,
Too oft 'tis blended with a vulgar force ;
And for simplicity's ingenuous heart,
Too free her aspect, and too rough her art.

Thus thinks the muse, and what she thinks she tells,
Her bosom with no hostile passion swells ;
With pleasure she attends at merit's call,
And her fond wish is to be just to all.

In WALLIS we the vivid bloom espy,
Of worth that long shall charm the public eye ;
And soon will Time, with kind maturing pow'r,
Expand the foliage and exalt the flow'r.
A beauteous rival we in MILLER trace,
Of kindred feeling and of kindred grace ;
Oh ! may they nobly emulative soar,
And be what YATES and CRAWFORD were before.

Candour

Candour might well the partial muse arraign,
 Were MACKLIN left unnotic'd by her strain,
 Who on our ancestors for sanction draws,
 To urge prescriptive title to applause,
 And like an oak, yet unsubdu'd by age,
 Seems to stand forth the father of the Stage.

Whate'er by ripen'd judgment can be taught,
 And from the stores of long experience brought,
 In his laborious acting we may trace,
 Where stern precision shuts out ev'ry grace ;
 He seems to move, to speak, to think, by rule,
 The rigid pedagogue of system's school.
 No native fire e'er rushes to his eyes,
 And passions seem by precept to arise.
 Severe his plan, which awes, not wins the heart,
 For all appears the cold effect of art.
 All but the matchless Jew—that rais'd his name
 High o'er the critic's feeble praise or blame.

Whate'er he draws displays a master's force,
 But all his col'ring's in a style too coarse,
 And though the scheme may strike th' approving mind,
 The breast to sluggish languor is resign'd.
 Yet MACKLIN's outlines might an actor teach
 The noblest heights of excellence to reach,

For

For sense matur'd affords a solid skill,
And, though he roughly draws, 'tis nature still.

In comic parts the same hard truth appears ;
Though to the text with judgment he adheres,
And in essential features seldom fails,
A rugged energy through all prevails.

When worth like MACKLIN's claims the critic lay—
An orb bright beaming in departing day—
Fain would the heart on all his merits dwell ;
With fond reluctance ev'ry blemish tell ;
But truth aloft th' impartial scales suspends,
And at her shrine the muse submissive bends.

For sprightly scenes of higher life design'd,
Where fashion's airy whims delude the mind,
Where homely reason yields to polish'd pride,
And nature's vulgar feelings are decry'd,
LEWIS, with lively taste and easy mien,
Gives gay precision to the comic scene.

When wounded pride with quick resentment glows,
The flippant fury he politely shews,
And, to whate'er excess the passion reigns,
A well-bred anger through the whole sustains.

But LEWIS chiefly shines in parts that aim
With noise and frolic to secure a name,

By darling notoriety to rise,
 And all the rules of sober life despise ;
 Here laughter's loudest roar he justly draws,
 And WOODWARD might with envy hear th' applause.

Among the various vot'ries of the stage,
 Who shine in comic ease or tragic rage,
 Few, though of nobler requisites possest,
 Can boast, like BENSLEY, influence o'er the breast.

By nature fashion'd in an hour of spleen,
 Blest with few outward pow'rs to grace the scene ;
 No marking eyes to image forth the soul,
 When struggling tides of various passions roll ;
 No voice to dignify the poet's sense,
 Or melting strains of pathos to dispense :
 Yet, maugre these defects, we always find
 A true conception of his author's mind ;
 A manly fervour, and a judgment clear,
 That force from coldest critics praise sincere.

In tragedy, his proper sphere is Age,
 The patriot-warrior and the solemn sage.
 In comic scenes his efforts best appear
 When snarling truths sententious and severe ;
 Hence we behold his talents ably fit
 VANBURGH's shrewd sense, and CONGREVE's manly wit.

Where

Where travel'd fops, too nice for nature grown,
 Are sway'd by affectation's whims alone ;
 Where the sly knave, usurping honour's guise,
 By secret villany attempts to rise ;
 Or where the footman, negligently gay,
 His master's modish airs would fain display ;
 But chiefly where the rake, in higher life,
 Cajoles the husband to seduce the wife,
 And, fraught with art, but plausible to sight,
 The libertine and hypocrite unite :
 PALMER from life the faithful portrait draws,
 And calls unrival'd for our warm applause.

In WROUGHTON's acting, though we rarely find
 The vig'rous traces that denote a mind
 Form'd for the high achievements of the stage,
 His efforts always our respect engage.

In scenes of injur'd virtue, that require
 A bold exertion of ingenuous fire,
 With honest energy the part he feels,
 And with true pathos to the breast appeals.

When *Buckingham*, betray'd by *Wolsey's* pow'r
 To shameful death in manhood's blooming hour,
 Without one friend to stem the adverse tide,
 Falls a sad sacrifice to priestly pride,

There WROUGHTON's skill excites th' applauding sigh,
And pity's gems illumine ev'ry eye.

Still in his proper sphere would he remain,
A warm protection he must justly gain ;
But if ambition spread her fatal fire,
And bid his mind at daring heights aspire,
The giddy summit will his pow'rs confound,
And critic fury drag him to the ground.
Lest in forbidden paths he still should roam,
The friendly muse thus kindly calls him home.
The weight of *Lear*, unable to sustain,
Beneath the weighty load he sunk with pain ;
And wak'd in *Jaffier* a regret more keen,
That BARRY's pow'rs no more shall grace the scene.

When nature fashion'd DODD, severely kind,
She those peculiar requisites combin'd
Which ne'er can image manhood's vig'rous bloom,
But shine in insects of the drawing-room.
None on the stage, so well as he, can show
The various traces of that thing, *the beau*,
Whether in *Meggot's gusto* it appear,
In *Tattle's levity* or *Back-bite's sneer*,
In all, he acts upon so nice a plan,
He seems in life to be the very man,

But

But that, in life he acts without offence,
 And boasts with plain good humour, plain good-sense,
 No scanty praise should be to DODD assign'd,
 Were he to foppish parts alone confin'd ;
 And yet his pow'rs, not limited to these,
 In quaint simplicity can justly please :
 No equal *Master Stephen* has been found
 Since SHUTER spread resistless mirth around ;
 And *Ague-Cheek*, drawn with unborrow'd art,
 Presents the matchless bard's embody'd part.

But his chief excellence in fops is seen,
 There, happy union ! figure, voice and mien,
 This honest verdict must for DODD engage—
 That he's the greatest coxcomb on the stage.

Disdaining imitation's servile plan,
 Vers'd in the various whims of changeful man,
 As long as genuine humour can invite,
 PARSONS will still be welcom'd with delight.

His chief success is seen in lower life,
 In noisy drunkenness and rustic strife ;
 And in the envious petulance of age,
 With happiest skill he props the comic stage.

Perhaps the common passion for applause,
 Sometimes aside his better judgment draws ;

Perhaps

Perhaps extravagance and wild grimace
 Too oft are seen usurping humour's place ;
 But in the scenes our living CONGREVE drew,
 Where Spite her image may in *Crabtree* view,
 Or where *Sir Fretful* struggles with the smart
 Of rankling passions that disgrace the heart,
 Malice herself must own he's rarely found
 To pass o'er modest nature's simple bound.

Ah ! PARSONS, keep to nature's simple style,
 Let not the roar of vulgar praise beguile,
 And sternest critics shall confess thy claim
 To join the highest rank in comic fame.

AICKIN, in characters of rugged mould,
 Is always justly strong, and chastely bold ;
 Untouch'd by pride, he always seems intent
 To be exactly what the author meant.
 Where blunt integrity, undaunted, shews
 The roughest feeling that the bosom knows,
 Dares flippant folly openly despise,
 And view the vicious with indignant eyes,
 The part with native vigour he pourtrays,
 And to the heart with sense and feeling plays.

At MOODY's call the muse resumes her strain,
MOODY, a vet'ran on the comic plain,
Whose talents might our warmest praise engage,
In low-bred humour and in rustic age,
But that, too conscious of his former name,
He yields to sluggish indolence his frame,
Glares with a vacant visage on the throng,
And idly drags his torpid limbs along.

Candour herself must own, he oft is seen
As if his mind were sunk in stupid spleen.
Critics who ne'er his former merit knew,
With cold contempt the lifeless lumber view,
And scarce believe, that one unhurt by age
Can thus obscure a genius for the stage.

Strange ! that an actor who could once excite
With humour's genuine force, no mean delight,
Who drew from nature ev'ry simple clown,
And in *Hibernia's* sons rais'd just renown,
Should, by so vile a negligence betray'd,
His public character so far degrade.

MOODY, for shame ! bring all thy talents forth,
Let rising critics know thy native worth,
That worth, to careless indolence a prey,
That else would brightly deck thy closing day.

At

Though

Though HULL from nature few externals owns,
 No striking features, no expressive tones,
 Yet has she giv'n an ample recompense,
 In firm integrity and manly sense.

Where cautious age, from long experience wise,
 To check wild youth's impetuous ardour tries,
 The rev'rend monitor he justly plays,
 And boasts substantial claim to critic praise.
 But with most force he strikes upon the heart
 Whene'er he personates a worthy part ;
 Warm with congenial fire, we always find
 The genuine workings of an honest mind ;
 The virtuous fervour mounts into his face,
 And the man's worth we in the actor trace.
 When from these kindred characters he flies,
 To wear the hoary villain's base disguise,
 His gen'rous feelings counteract the part,
 And nature triumphs o'er his baffled art.

The honest muse at first may only mean
 To paint the worth that decks the public scene ;
 But when, among the stage's careless train,
 She finds a character exempt from stain,
 Pleas'd she deserts the critic's nicer plan,
 And leaves the actor to applaud the man.

With

With comic pow'rs abundantly supply'd,
 QUICK draws from feeling, and makes life his guide.
 While parts from nature caught, with artless ease,
 Of crabbed age or rustic youth can please ;
 While the quaint characters in various life,
 Of noisy humour and of vulgar strife,
 Display'd with spirit as with skill design'd,
 Receive the welcome they deserve to find,
 QUICK must a fav'rite with the public stand,
 And rank conspicuous 'mid the comic band.

Now should deep awe the modest strains indite,
 For great LEE-LEWES meets the marv'ling sight.
 Lo ! here's the man who boasts the wond'rous skill
 To mend the poet's brightest thoughts at will ;
 Whose fertile mind, whate'er dull critics say,
 At once can elevate the noblest lay.
 SHAKSPEARE, indeed, instructed once the clown
 Not to say more than what the bard set down ;
 But SHAKSPEARE was not able to presage
 The genius form'd to grace this happy age,
 And in a moment raise his matchless page.

}

Yet say, what grounds support this bold pretence
 At will to wanton with the poet's sense ?

F

What

With

What talents has the great LEE-LEWES shewn ?

Holds he just title to the critic throne ?

Is he the noblest poet of the age ?

Or brightest planet that illumines the stage ?—

No more, dull spleen, these surly questions ask,

For know he shines, *in jumping through a cask !*

Oh ! mighty man ! confine this active flame

That thus impels thee in pursuit of fame :

Remain, with pantomimic fancies stor'd,

The motley hero of the wooden sword.

Or if ambition prompts thee to aspire

At characters that speech and sense require,

No more presume, with sacrilegious rage,

To mar the poet's consecrated page ;

Deign to the simple meaning to submit,

And let dull duty check thy eager wit.

Once more Digression, rambling fool, adieu,

The actor's merit let us briefly view :

LEE-LEWES here is in his proper light,

And with true humour, pleasure can excite.

In comic pow'rs, though nature has been kind,

Yet to few scenes his talents are confin'd :

Too flippant for the sphere of well-bred ease,

And yet too coarse in airy fops to please,

Warm,

Warm, but too rough, he chiefly seems design'd
For sprightly parts, nor rugged nor refin'd ;
Where taste and fashion fire the buckish Cit,
Who fondly deems his noise and nonsense wit ;
Or where the easy valet, pert and vain,
Salutes his master in familiar strain,
Dares at each modish folly to pretend,
And, being pandar, is receiv'd as friend.

With crest erect, and with impetuous force,
See vent'rous HOLMAN urge his fiery course ;
Like the bold steed, just starting from the rein,
That rears, that bounds, that flies along the plain :
Amplly endow'd with figure, voice and face,
And fashion'd well for the heroic race.

Next POPE advances, with a milder mien,
A graver step, and passions more serene :
Their mutual pow'rs, like mingling light and shade,
With spirit, force and truth, the drama aid.
This sweetly plains *Castalio's* tender woe,
That nobly vents *Chamont's* indignant glow ;
One well supports *Horatio's* moral strain,
The other proud *Lothario's* taunting vein ;

Or, higher to enroll each diff'rent plea,
 HOLMAN an *Anthony*, a *Brutus* He.

The junior BANNISTER, a lively wight,
 To public favour boasts a solid right.
 O'er EDWIN's track, by kindred genius led,
 Yet in his steps he nobly scorns to tread ;
 Acts from himself, in native humour bold,
 And, if at times too free, in nothing cold.

Whate'er eccentric humour may require,
 When coxcomb follies pass for wit and fire ;
 Where rustic vassals, strongly urg'd by fear,
 Would yet heroical and gay appear ;
 Or where the Cit, half blockhead and half beau,
 In higher circles would his whimsies shew—
 There pealing laughter testifies his worth,
 And spleen herself must own the kindling mirth.

To worthier scenes too, will his talents bend—
 The sportive lover and the active friend ;
 Yet when Thalia on the infant smil'd,
 She mark'd him for the ludicrous and wild.

Close follows SUEP, whimsical and quaint,
 A waggish coward, or a canting saint ;

An aged miser, or a sportive clown,
In all, a pleasant fav'rite of the town.

JOHNSTONE to praise maintains a fair pretence,
Who strengthens music with the charm of sense.
'Tis his to vindicate his native race
With easy humour or with manly grace,
And, man or master, his *Hibernians* shew
They melt with kindness, as with honour glow.

'Tis MUNDEN's praise to heed his author's aim,
And ev'ry fond ambitious impulse tame ;
Hence we behold him wear, with careful art,
Not more the dress than manners of the part.
His clowns, his coxcombs, and his peevish age,
He takes from life, as well as from the page,
And hence a faithful portrait holds to view—
If dry the col'ring, yet the outline true.

See KELLY next, and beauteous CROUCH appear,
With mutual aim to grace the vocal sphere,
And hence their pow'rs in happy union move,
To aid the scenes of harmony and love.

Fain would the muse, ere yet she ends the lay,
 To other worth the debt of justice pay,
 But fears her idle comments to prolong,
 Lest the tir'd reader loathe the lengthen'd song.

Else BARRYMORE might claim the tribute due,
 Who acts with spirit—KEMBLE in his view ;
 And WHITFIELD, doom'd to linger in the shade,
 While meaner talents glare in vain parade ;
 FARREN, who climbs not to the heights of fame,
 But treads on solid ground with steady aim ;
 Or modest HARLEY, who, himself a bard,
 Still eyes his author with a deep regard ;
 And MIDDLETON, with youthful spirit warm,
 Whose daring hope the rival muses charm ;
 FAWCET, who EDWIN's loss would fain atone,
 And who, though coarse, has humour of his own ;
 MOUNTAIN the placid, and DE CAMP the gay,
 Alike with taste to sing, and sense to play ;
 LEAKE, high already 'mid the tuneful band,
 The gentle GOODALL, and the sprightly BLAND ;
 The buxom MARTYR, milder CHAPMAN's claim,
 And more, with talents not unknown to fame.

On these we haply may renew the plan,
 And their respective merits fairly scan ;

But

But lo ! the SCENIC SUN displays its beam,
And hence we hasten to a prouder theme.

When first the muse prefer'd her humble bay
To deck the fav'rites of a former day,
Scarce could she deem an orb would claim her song,
Form'd to transcend the brightest of the throng.

At SIDDONS' call, glad she resumes her lays,
To blend her tribute with the gen'ral praise,
And though too sure, alas ! her feeble strain
Must, on such matchless pow'rs, essay in vain,
Yet may the muse, howe'er in numbers faint,
Prove she can feel what she despairs to paint.
But SIDDONS' name can raise a potent spell,
And mem'ry with her stores must fondly swell,
Recall at once her voice, her eye, her mien,
And all the wonders of the mimic scene ;
Nor dazzled critics heed th' unequal lay,
Lost in the blaze of recollected day.

Blest with a form for happy sculpture's hand,
To fix the lines of graceful and of grand ;
A harmony of face, and pow'r of eye,
To image all that feeling can supply ;
A voice, each change of passion to engage,
From tend'rest pathos to the wildest rage :

Soft

Soft as the breeze that wantons with the flow'r,
 When on the heart she tries her gentler pow'r ;
 Strong as the storm, when fury takes its course,
 And madness strains it to the utmost force ;
 Beyond all sense of fiction she can soar,
 And real horrors scarce could whelm us more.

Whether her *Zara's* proud disastrous love,
 Or *Shore's* mild woes, the kindred feelings move—
 Whether her genius tempt a bolder flight,
 The frail *Macbeth* to murd'rous deeds incite,
 Terrific spurn at nature's softest laws,
 Or playful plead misguided *Cassio's* cause :
 Whether she seeks to make our sorrows flow
 Through unambitious scenes of home-felt woe,
 Where mid the wreck of fortune, fame, and life,
 The *Gamester* leaves his fond, though ruin'd wife :
 In all, sublime, endearing, or refin'd,
 The great pervading energy is MIND ;
 In all, the passions to her potent art
 By turns resign the subjugated heart.

But though she thus the tragic heights can gain,
 And pour the plaintive or heroic strain,
 With graceful ease the “ *learned sock*” she wears—
 Thus *Rosalind* her comic skill declares,

Whose

Whose sportive elegance can sweetly move
With happiest charm of gaiety and love.

Oh ! thou whose pow'r can sooth or storm the soul,
With magic touch the fiercest to controul ;
Who, born the drama's noblest paths to trace,
Canst e'en to SHAKSPEARE's muse impart new grace,
Let scandal rave, let sick'ning envy try
To blast thy laurels and thy worth decry,
While 'tis thy noble triumph, only those,
Sure test of genius, are thy hopeless foes :
The feeling still thy merit shall attest,
Give thee fond credit for a kindred breast,
Swell with thy rage, and with thy anguish mourn,
As vice shall tow'r, or virtue droop forlorn,
And while less grateful plaudits stun thine ear,
Bestow a nobler meed—the *silent tear*.

To close in order due, our long career,
See KEMBLE march majestic and severe ;
Fraught with uncommon pow'rs of form and face,
He comes the pomp of tragedy to grace.

Fertile in genius, and matur'd by art,
Not soft to steal, but stern to seize, the heart,
In mould of figure, and in frame of mind,
To him th' heroic sphere must be assign'd.

August or daring, he adorns the stage—
 The gloomy subtlety, the savage rage,
 The scornful menace, and the cynic ire,
 The hardy valour, and the patriot fire—
 These shew the vigour of a master's hand,
 And o'er the fancy give him firm command :
 As *Richard*, *Timon*, and *Macbeth* proclaim,
 Or stern *Coriolanus*' nobler aim.

Nor fierce alone, for well his pow'rs can shew
 Calm declamation and attemper'd woe ;—
 The virtuous *Duke* who sway a while declines,
 Yet checks the *Deputy*'s abhor'd designs,
 And, in the Sov'reign or the saintly guise,
 Benevolently just, and meekly wise :
 The *Dane*, bewailing now a father's fate,
 Now deeply pond'ring man's mysterious state ;
 Tender and dignifi'd, alike are seen—
 The philosophic mind and princely mien.

When merely tender, he appears too cold ;
 Or rather fashion'd in too rough a mould :
 Nor fitted love in softer form to wear,
 But stung with pride, or mad'ning with despair ;
 As when the lost *Octavian*'s* murmurs flow
 In full luxuriance of romantic woe.

* The Mountaineers.

Yet where *Orlando* cheers desponding age,
 Or the sweet wiles of *Rosalind* engage,
 We own, that manly graces finely blend
 The tender lover and the soothing friend.

Though nature was so prodigally kind
 In the bold lineaments of form and mind,
 As if to check a fond excess of pride,
 The pow'rs of voice she scantily supply'd :
 Oft, when the hurricanes of passion rise,
 For correspondent tones he vainly tries ;
 To aid the storm, no tow'ring note combines,
 And the spent breath th' unequal task declines.
 Yet, spite of nature, he compels us still
 To own the potent triumph of his skill,
 While, with dread pauses, deepen'd accents roll,
 Whose awful energy arrests the soul.

At times, perchance, the spirit of the scene,
 Th' impassion'd accent, and impressive mien,
 May lose their wonted force, while, too refin'd,
 He strives by niceties to strike the mind ;
 For action too precise, inclin'd to pore,
 And labour for a point unknown before ;
 Untimely playing thus the critic's part,
 To gain the head, when he should smite the heart.

Yet still must candour, on reflection, own
 Some useful comment has been shrewdly shewn ;
 Nor here let puny malice vent its gall,
 And texts with skill restor'd, *new readings* * call ;
 KEMBLE for actors nobly led the way,
 And prompted them to think as well as play.

With cultur'd sense, and with experience sage,
 Patient he cons the time-disfigur'd page,
 Hence oft we see him with success explore,
 And clear the dross from rich poetic ore,
 Trace, through the maze of diction, passion's clew,
 And open latent character to view.

Though for the muse of tragedy design'd,
 In form, in features, passions, and in mind,
 Yet would he fain the comic nymph embrace,
 Who seldom without awe beholds his face.
 Whene'er he tries the airy and the gay,
 Judgment, not genius, marks the cold essay ;
 But in a graver province he can please
 With well-bred spirit, and with manly ease.
 When genuine wit, with satire's active force,
 And faithful love pursues its gen'rous course,
 Here, in his *Valentine*, might CONGREVE view
 Th' embody'd portrait, vig'rous, warm and true.

* The *cant term* by which useful researches have been discouraged.

Nor let us, with unhallow'd touch, presume
 To pluck one sprig of laurel from the tomb ;
 Yet, with due rev'rence for the mighty dead,
 'Tis just the fame of living worth to spread :
 And could the noblest vet'rans now appear,
 KEMBLE might keep his state, devoid of fear ;
 Still, while observant of his proper line,
 With native lustre as a rival shine.

Thus has the muse, in artless numbers, try'd
 The claims of Genius fairly to decide ;
 Averse to censure, anxious to commend,
 And to the moral stage a zealous friend.

If the known merits of the scenic band
 Demand the tribute of a nobler hand,
 Yet may she boast, nor partial nor severe,
 Her strains the dictates of a mind sincere ;
 And should the vent'rous boast be deem'd too high,
 That all is seen with an impartial eye,
 The muse at least can feel with honest pride,
 Her bias must be charg'd on candour's side.

S O N N E T S.

S O N N E T I.

THOU fair unknown, dear visionary maid,
That oft art seen by fancy's raptur'd eyes,
To whom my anxious heart so long hath paid
The tend'rest homage of expecting sighs ;

Oh ! deign in mortal form to bless my view,
Grac'd with the charms that thus delight my mind ;
That temper gentle, and that honour true,
That judgment solid, and that taste refin'd.

Oh ! come thou fancy's idol, hope's best joy !
Unbounded empire o'er my breast assume,
And time's dread scythe shall ne'er my love destroy,
That still shall flourish in unfading bloom :

Still shall my heart retain the hallow'd fire,
And love and life in one fond sigh expire.

SONNET II.

AH! ill-star'd wretch, a heart ordain'd to bear,
 Where love might triumph with eternal sway,
 Yet sadly doom'd to find no faithful fair
 Whose tender cares its sorrows might allay ;

Whose gentle hand, to cheer life's dreary scene,
 Might sweetest flowrets of affection strew—
 Not prompt to change with fortune's varying mien,
 But 'mid the darkest hours most fondly true.

No bliss like this endears my anxious day,
 Not e'en reliev'd by Hope's delusive dreams ;
 E'en Hope, alas ! withdraws its trembling ray,
 Once the bright dawn of Love's inspiring beams.

Love ! dearest recompense that man can find
 For all the sorrows of a wounded mind.

SONNET III.

STAY, stay thy course, oh ! swift-advancing Night,
 While thus to DELIA I pursue my way,
 Still let me gain from day's departing light,
 To guide from devious tracks, one friendly ray.

Pensive I else should hail thy sober hue,
 And well thou know'st, that, rapt in DELIA's charms,
 With sick'ning eye officious morn I view,
 That soon, ah soon, must force me from her arms.

Then, sable Goddess, grant my ardent pray'r,
 Still prove propitious to expecting love ;
 And let me fold the wonders of my fair,
 E'er yet again thy shadowy pinions move.

Then gently wave them on, with kind delay,
 And long, oh ! long, repel obtrusive day.

SONNET IV.

LOVE! thou dread pow'r, who many a hapless day
 Hast proudly triumph'd o'er my captive soul,
 Thy tyrant rule no longer I obey,
 And undisturb'd by thee, the moments roll.

No more thy cares shall 'whelm my languid eyes,
 No more my face thy pallid gloom shall wear,
 No more my bosom pour unheeded sighs,
 But rest regain its lost dominion there.

True, from thy mingled source some transports rise,
 While the fond heart in youth's gay season glows,
 But sorrow lurks beneath the fair disguise,
 And many a thorn surrounds thy transient rose]

Then come Indiff'rence, with thy placid reign,
 For thou at least art peace—Love certain pain.

SONNET V.

AH ! dear MARIA, could my muse impart
 The glowing love that triumphs o'er my mind,
 The fervid strains might touch thy tranquil heart,
 And my sad soul a kindred ardour find.

But know, my fair, in vain her tuneless lyre
 Would strive to shew my passion's wild extreme,
 A passion pure as virtue's hallow'd fire,
 And warm as youthful fancy's fondest dream.

As well her daring numbers might essay
 The various graces of thy form to sing,
 Or, rising still with more presumptuous lay,
 Wake to the beauties of thy mind the string.

Ah ! ne'er by words thy charms can be exprest,
 Nor their soft influence o'er my captive breast.

SONNET VI.

THE faithful fair whom Hope, prophetic maid,
 So oft had promis'd to my longing eyes,
 At length has all my former cares o'erpaid,
 By sacred love's indissoluble ties.

In dear MARIA ev'ry grace I view,
 My heart, deluded oft, despair'd to find,
 MARIA, tender, beautiful and true,
 Beyond what fancy's flatt'ring skill design'd.

Thou only darling of my raptur'd eyes,
 Though far beneath such wondrous worth as thine,
 And hopeless to deserve the mighty prize,
 Yet to the charming task I life resign.

Nor can my soul a greater transport know
 Than still with thee to find my heav'n below.

SONNET VII.

ALL the fair scenes that Hope so fondly plan'd,
 Delightful recompense for former care!
 The potent force of Fate's tremendous wand,
 At one dread touch, dissolv'd in empty air.

MARIA, lovely, amiable and kind—
 She who was all my eager soul desir'd,
 Of fairest excellence in form and mind,
 A few short months entranc'd me, and expir'd.

Nor would the tender pledge of hallow'd love,
 Whose birth, so fatal, broke th' endearing tie,
 Remain, his soft atoning charms to prove,
 But to his mother's sainted spirit fly.

Ah! sacred shade, too hard was the decree,
 To take my only solace, 'reft of thee,

SONNET VIII.

TO MRS. SIDDONS,

ON A BUST OF HER BROTHER AS CORIOLANUS, MOULDED
BY HERSELF.

NOT less resisting is the senseless clay
Shap'd into MIND by thy creative skill,
Than is the heart to thy imperial sway,
Submitting all the passions at thy will.

Lo! where the bust displays, with awful grace,
The lofty workings of a patriot soul,
And, while expressive of each kindred trace,
A Roman energy pervades the whole.

Ah! SIDDONS, since this plastic pow'r is thine,
Strait on thyself employ the happy art,
Then, through the true sublime of form, will shine
All that adorns and dignifies the heart.

So future times shall own, the finish'd piece
Transcends the noblest works of vaunting *Greece*.

SONNET

SONNET IX.

TO MR. JERNINGHAM,

ON HIS EPISTLE FROM ABELARD TO ELOISA.

Too well, oh ! feeling bard, thy lines pourtray
Of unpropitious love the soft despair,
The tears of Sympathy reward thy lay,
And her sad bosom swells with kindred care.

The dread solemnity of cloister'd grief,
Genius sublime, of love the hapless prey,
Life's horrid blank, precluding all relief,
Untimely blight in summer's glowing day :

Memorials sad of an ill-fated pair !
Touch'd by that charm the muse alone can give ;
Who dooms thy name in their renown to share,
And with the " well sung woes " for ever live.

For like his fair now ABELARD shall move,
With mingled charms of poetry and love.

SONNET

SONNET X.

TO THE SAME,

ON HIS POEM, ENTITLED "THE SHAKSPEARE GALLERY."

HAIL bard rever'd, whose strains so well have taught
 Painting's congenial art its noblest aim,
 Thou whose bold hand from SHAKSPEARE'S shrine
 hath caught
 A vivid beam of his immortal flame.

Thine is the praise, t'illumine the airy fane
 Of gaudy FASHION, with poetic fire,
 Luring the wild, th' ambitious, and the vain,
 To hang enraptur'd o'er the muse's lyre.

Yet should thy fancy tempt a bolder flight,
 And thy lov'd SHAKSPEARE'S radiant track pursue,
 Rove through dramatic haunts with proud delight,
 Nor doubt that noble game will spring to view :

So shall the art thy precepts have refin'd,
 Draw bright examples from thy pregnant mind.

SONNET

SONNET XI.

TO MRS. ROBINSON,

ON HER POEM, ENTITLED "SIGHT."

THE bard who, uncontroul'd by place and time,
Above creation sought his trackless way,
And, borne on Epic pinions, tower'd sublime
To purest realms of Empyrean day :

He, whose 'rapt spirit urg'd him to survey
Regions of bliss, immortals only know,
Of sad continuous night was doom'd the prey,
Reft of all pow'r to view the world below.

And though the plainings of his lofty muse,
" Total eclipse," and all its woes, relate,
Thine paints the scenes he lost with brighter hues,
And with more force the horrors of his fate.

Strange ! thus the hallow'd poet to excel,
E'en on the theme he knew, alas ! too well.

SONNET XII.

TO THE SAME,

ON HER MONODY TO THE MEMORY OF THE QUEEN OF FRANCE.

In vain th' historic muse shall weeping try
 The wrongs to shew of *Gallia's* martyr'd Queen ;
 In vain shall painting to the languid eye
 Present the horrors of the fatal scene !

Ah ! what her various suff'rings can relate,
 Her awful dignity, her mute disdain,
 With all the fell extremes of ruffian hate,
 Like the bold force of thy impassion'd strain.

Yet as we sigh along the mournful tale,
 And drop the frequent tribute of a tear,
 The muse spreads flow'rs o'er sorrow's dreary vale,
 With passing sweets the fainting soul to cheer.

While pity, sunk amid such dire alarms,
 Is sooth'd by fancy's animating charms.

SONNET XIII.

TO THE SAME,

ON HER LEGENDARY TALE, ENTITLED "*VANCENZA*."

THE placid charms of that romantic seat
 Where once *Vancenza* rear'd its glit'ring vanes,
 All the lov'd tenants of the sweet retreat,
 Diffusing bliss around the wide domains :—

To these dear shades of calm secluded joy,
 Ah ! sad reverse, *Madrid*'s detested scene,
 Where basest arts in fairest forms annoy,
 And murder lurks in pleasure's airy mien.

Such, gentle *LAURA*, is thy mystic tale,
 A dread memento to confiding youth ;—
 Yet still the muse's glowing tints prevail,
 While fancy lures us to the shrine of truth.

And should *Vancenza* wear too rich a vest,
 'Tis Sensibility by Genius drest.

SONNET

SONNET XIV.

ON THE SAME.

AH! why, dear LAURA, when thy fertile mind,
 A mind that all the gentler feelings sway,
Vancenza's legendary griefs design'd,
 Why doom distress upon the good to prey?

For sure the moral, with superior force,
 Had found a passage to the soften'd heart,
 Had virtue triumph'd in her even course,
 And vice alone endur'd misfortune's dart.

Then, dear Enthusiast, while, with sorrowing eye,
 We trac'd thy melting tale of fabled woe,
 The breast that caught from sympathy the sigh,
 Ah! sweet reverse! its rapture too would know.

As dark'ning skies distill the balmy rain,
 'Till Sol revives, and beautifies the plain.

SONNET XV.

TO MISS ROBINSON,

To thee, dear offspring of a gentle fair,
By genius rais'd among the glowing band,
Ordain'd his proudest energies to share,
And wave with magic force his potent wand :

To thee, whom, like the blush of op'ning morn,
The vermil herald of a radiant day,
Such blooming hopes in early youth adorn,
Fain would a friendly muse her homage pay.

Fain would she celebrate thy ceaseless aim,
With tend'rest cares to sooth a mother's pain ;
Yet the endearing solace to proclaim,
Too weak were e'en that mother's wond'rous strain,

Poor that best treasure of poetic art,
To the rich meed of thy own feeling heart.

SONNET XVI.

TO MRS. ROBINSON.

ENCHANTING LAURA, whose resistless spell
In sweetest thraldom holds the willing soul,
Breathing such strains from thy melodious shell,
That sternest natures own the soft control ;

Too partial seem'd the lot by heav'n assign'd
To thee, dear mistress of the plaintive lyre,
The perfect form and the transcendant mind,
Beauty's best charm, and fancy's brightest fire.

Yet, in thy glowing youth's delicious bloom,
With various merit so supremely grac'd,
Thy genius, beauty, sentiment and taste,
By sickness whelm'd in sorrow's hopeless gloom.

Poor is the solace, that exulting Fame
Has join'd with noblest bards thy equal name.

SONNET

SONNET XVII.

TO THE SAME.

HAIL, pensive Songstress, whose entrancing lay
 So sweetly soothes the sadden'd soul to rest—
 Pathetic sov'reign of the tender breast,
 Gentle as eve, and lust'rous as the day.

Whether to plaintive grove thy fancy lead,
 To hermit cave, or mountain's trembling height,
 The battle's sanguine plain, the peaceful mead,
 Still the fond muse attends thy fervid flight,

Description yields her pencil to thy hand,
 That pencil, fraught with ev'ry varying die,
 A new creation springs at thy command,
 And brighter beauties catch the ravish'd eye.

Ah! since o'er other hearts so potent known,
 Why sadly doom'd to sink beneath thy own!

SONNET XVIII.

TO AN ABSENT BROTHER.

WHILST thou, dear Youth, misled by fortune's rays,
 Still seek'st the meteor o'er the burning land
 Where Phœbus pours unmitigated blaze,
 And nature droops amid the scorching sand ;

Vain is thy toil, and all thy hopes are vain,
 Unskill'd to ply each Asiatic art ;
 To trample justice in pursuit of gain—
 Thy unresisted check *a feeling heart*.

Nor for thyself didst thou undaunted dare—
 Tempting the troublous deep and sultry zone,
 The dross that maddens life beneath thy care,
 Save in thy zeal for kindred ties alone :

Yet know, dear Youth, we only sigh to see
 The treasure soon restor'd, we lost in thee.

SONNET XIX.

OH! Independence, turn thine awful brow,
 And deign to me thy kindness to impart,
 If low the state thy bounty may allow,
 Freedom at least will animate my heart.

Hence shall I 'scape the mean insidious friend
 Who fain by favours would secure a slave,
 And, while to thee alone my hopes extend,
 Despise the wealthy fool and titled knave.

Cheer'd by thy smile, o'er life's uncertain road,
 As harmless impulse guides, ah! let me stray,
 And, free from obligation's galling load,
 Thou and the muse shall smooth the rugged way:

The muse, who tempts me still to court her pow'r,
 Though to her nobler heights deny'd to tow'r.

E L E G Y.

OFT have I rov'd in fancy's flow'ry way,
 And sung, as love inspir'd, of pleasing woes ;
 But now a simple, melancholy lay,
 From sorrow's deepest source resistless flows.

Yet why, my heart, indulge this mournful strain ?
 Why fondly point misfortune's piercing goad,
 Now the dear victim of severest pain
 No longer bends with life's oppressive load ?

The tender texture of her gentle heart,
 Thy thorns, ingratitude, no more shall rend ;
 No more shall malice aim her venom'd dart,
 And deeper wound in semblance of a friend.

Thus from the train of life's dire evils free,
 Should I, lamented shade, bewail thy doom ?
 Ah ! rather fondly sigh to gain like thee,
 The peaceful shelter of the silent tomb.

K

And

And yet the virtues of thy placid mind
 Form'd the sweet presage of a nobler fate ;
 Where souls like thine, from sordid earth refin'd,
 On sacred thrones enjoy immortal state.

It must be so—a brighter end appears
 Than the cold silence of the dreary grave ;
 And spirits, wafted from this vale of tears,
 In hallow'd streams of bliss eternal lave.

Sure then, dear shade, if one of human kind
 May such sublime enjoyments hope to know,
 In those celestial mansions thou shalt find
 A full reward for all thy cares below.

And there the soul, that to thy mem'ry true,
 Now mourns thy fortune in this artless lay,
 Its earth-born union haply may renew
 In the bright regions of eternal day.

E L E G Y,

SINCE, dearest maid, our hearts so truly know

We're still united by a firm regard,

Why should we hide the sympathetic glow,

And of our former joys be thus debar'd ?

While thus divided by a foolish pride,

Fate's sudden stroke may soon my heart surprize,

And the cold grave's oblivious mansion hide

My mould'ring frame for ever from thine eyes.

Oh ! think what pangs would then my breast invade,

What anxious wishes throb, alas ! in vain ;

How would'st thou then thy stubborn heart upbraid,

And mourn the moments thou could'st ne'er regain.

Then would sad mem'ry paint my constant flame,

And still to view our wonted transports bring ;

Then the suspicion would thy heart disclaim,

That wounds our friendship with its baleful sting.

A thousand tender trifles would arise,
And o'er my frailties cast a friendly shade ;
A thousand virtues still would meet thine eyes,
By sorrowing love's illusive fancy made.

Then heed no longer the malignant tale
That clouds with dark distrust thy gen'rous mind ;
Still let thy former fondness there prevail,
And urge a union time shall ne'er unbind.

ON THE POEMS OF MRS. ROBINSON.

MADNESS, in all thy horrors seen,
Thy sad and thy terrific mien,
Thy mutt'ring tongue and starting eye,
Thy scaring smile and rending sigh :

Dread wretch, whose mis'ry chills with fear,
Forbidding timid pity's tear ;
Thy state, in hues that ne'er shall fade,
Has LAURA's potent muse pourtray'd :

That muse, who livelier charms can fling
O'er wanton zephyrs of the spring,
As swift they glide to sweet repose
In the soft bosom of the rose.

That muse, whose vivid force can tell
Of mighty Love's resistless spell ;
Who o'er the sternest hearts can reign,
And hold it in a myrtle chain.

That muse, who, chanting music's pow'r
In Philomela's blossom'd bow'r,
Can make the plummy minstrel doat
On echo of a richer note.

That

That muse, who paints the steady glow
Of valour, rushing on the foe;
While fancy joins the martial train,
And weeps along the groaning plain.

That muse, who now the riv'let leads,
Soft stealing through enamel'd meads;
Or now can shake the foamy shore
With angry ocean's wildest roar.

That muse, whose daring strain displays
Imperial Sol's meridian blaze,
Or now the soft and solemn light
That guides the car of pensive night.

That muse—but what her pow'r shall bound?
She proudly wings Creation's round,
And still o'er ev'ry scene she views
Can more enchanting tints diffuse.

Oh, wond'rous fair! whose matchless song
Enamour'd lures the tuneful throng
To bend before thy sov'reign throne,
For poetry is now thy own.

ANSWER TO SOME LINES FROM MRS. ROBINSON.

WHEN ev'ning spreads her modest grey,
 And wraps in gloom the silent grove,
 Perchance, upon the lonely spray
 Some bird may twitter notes of love.

But when the deep'ning shadows grow,
 If love-lorn Philomel complain,
 In sympathy of melting woe,
 That bird entranc'd resigns her strain.

So I, when mute thy magic lyre,
 My feeble lays may fondly pour ;
 But strike again the dulcet wire,
 At once I listen and adore.

TO DELLA CRUSCA.

OH ! sweetest bard, whose raptur'd lyre
The muses and the loves inspire,
Once more resume thy melting song,
And charm the willing world along.

Whether we rove the gloomy shade,
And see the balmy blossoms fade,
As horror drives with frantic force,
And with'ring marks his baleful course ;

Or pausing on the martial plain,
O'er sacred mould of heroes slain,
We meditate with whelming grief
On poison of the laurel leaf ;

Or whether thy sublimer string
Strike to the dread terrific king,
Who mortals dooms to realms unknown,
To bend before his shadowy throne ;

Or seeking haunts of softer pow'r,
The lucid fount, the myrtle bow'r,
The breezy hill, the hermit cave,
The streams where all the muses love :

Say

Say do'st thou, fondly charm'd along
By fancy's wild and witching song,
With moon-light shadows seek repose,
The world forgetting and its woes?

For where thy potent muse is seen
The meads put forth a tend'rer green,
The rills in sweeter murmurs run,
The skies present a richer sun.

Does sorrow linger o'er thy lyre,
And sadly chill the conscious wire?
Does love the pensive hour invade,
And absence veil the darling maid?

Has malice, perfidy or pride,
Struck deep in friendship's bleeding side?
Long since thy piercing eye could scan
"The low ingratitude of man."

Lo! fame her fairest wreath assigns,
While love delighted chaunts thy lines,
Oh then resume thy melting song,
And charm the willing world along.

TO A LADY WITH A PAINTED ROSE.

ACCEPT, my fair, this mimic flow'r,
 A simple pledge of friendship's pow'r,
 And though no perfumes it exhales
 Like those which scent the vernal gales,
 No richly-mingled beauties shews,
 Like those which blooming spring bestows,
 Yet fancy, with delusions kind,
 Shall spread fair visions o'er thy mind,
 And fondly picture to thy view
 O'er ev'ry leaf, a brighter hue
 Than in the lap of fragrant May
 The pride of nature could display.

When wint'ry clouds deform the year,
 In vivid prime shall this appear ;
 Still image to thy raptur'd eyes
 Such glowing tints as shame the skies.
 Ah say, does wand'ring fancy guide,
 Can friendship's pow'r so far preside,
 Can it with magic force impart
 Such sweet illusions to the heart ?

Oh !

Oh! yes, by friendship's skill divine
 All scenes delight, all seasons shine,
 That, when the storms of winter roll,
 With constant spring can charm the soul,
 And bid the rose of pleasure blow
 'Mid poverty's surrounding snow.

Since thus its pow'r can sooth the soul,
 And all the rage of fate controul,
 Our hearts shall own its gentle sway
 Till fleeting life's remotest day:
 While as a pledge of the soft chain
 This flow'r shall still with thee remain;
 Protected by thy tender care
 All change of seasons it shall bear:
 If summer's fierce effulgence reign,
 Or frowning winter blast the plain,
 And like our friendship still defy
 Time's chilling force to bid it die,

TO MISS ROBINSON,
WITH HODGES'S VIEWS IN INDIA.

WHEN Genius, proud such worth to aid,
Inspires thy beauteous hand to trace
These scenes, a master's hand pourtray'd,
And lend to all an added grace:

Ah! then, dear maid, a moment pause,
And heed the moralizing muse;
She with unerring pencil draws,
And paints to Hope sublimer views,

The scenes that Asia spreads so fair,
And cloudless suns have deck'd so bright,
With transient kindness time shall spare,
And overwhelm those suns in endless night.

But virtue all his rage defies,
Exempt from nature's earthly doom,
With loveliest charm of radiant dies,
That flourish in eternal bloom.

TO JOHN HERIOT, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF A NOVEL, ENTITLED "THE HALF-PAY OFFICER."

YORICK a plaintive tale could frame,
And touch with sympathy the heart ;
But check'd the passions as they came,
While pity shrunk from obvious art.

Thou with an equal force can'st move
To moral bliss or useful pain,
The heart with wiser skill improve,
Its feelings waken and retain.

The cause indeed at once we find—
His sentiment was mere pretence ;
Thy native graces gain the mind
By virtuous zeal and manly sense,

Yet why must one unhappy fair
Her lover's needless death bewail ?
Her woes, alas ! the joys impair
That rise from thy impressive tale,

TO MRS. ROBINSON,

IN RETURN FOR HER POEMS.

AH! fain, dearest LAURA, my thanks would I pay,
 For the treasures of genius thy friendship bestows,
 But poor are all thanks to the worth of thy lay,
 Where the rich ore of poesy lavishly flows.

To praise that rich ore too were equally vain ;
 What muse but thy own can its value impart ?
 Yet when grateful simplicity offers the strain,
 'Tis the only reward that is dear to thy heart.

Then take, dearest LAURA, the tribute sincere,
 From a friend who admir'd thee in life's early hour,
 And beheld in thy bloom the sweet promise appear,
 That time has matur'd to so lovely a flow'r.

TO MRS. STEPHEN KEMBLE,

ON HER PERFORMANCE OF YARICO.

He who thy love-lorn plaints can hear
In YARICO betray'd,
And yet deny a pitying tear
To the poor injur'd maid,
Let him thro' Lybian deserts rove
With kindred brutes alone,
For all whom human passions move,
Thy melting sway must own.

TO THE SAME.

Could we in all the sable race
Thy truth and softness find,
The feeling heart would fondly trace
The "visage in the mind *."

* Othello.

TO, MARA,

ON HER BEING PUBLICLY INSULTED.

LAMENT not, MARA, that a ruffian throng
With brutal outrage paid thy magic song ;
They whose low minds could triumph in thy pain,
Knew not the merit of thy matchless strain.

Such were the rout, as ancient bards relate,
Who hurl'd the hapless ORPHEUS to his fate—
He whose melodious song could brutes subdue,
In vain implor'd a fiercer human crew.

PROLOGUES.

OCCASIONAL ADDRESS,

SPOKEN BY MRS. STEPHEN KEMBLE,

AT THE THEATRE-ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

So oft has PEGASUS been doom'd to trail
 O'er many a lofty hill and humble vale,
 That, ransack as we please Parnassian ground,
 Scarce one unbeaten place can now be found.
 Critics inform us, that on epic soil
 Old HOMER knew the country *ev'ry mile*;
 And VIRGIL's servile foot but travers'd o'er
 Regions his mighty master trod before;
 That through the Drama, mountain, lawn, or stream,
 Immortal SHAKSPEARE was the lord supreme;
 And ev'ry bard who rashly stray'd from thence,
 O'er-leap'd the verge of modest nature's fence.
 Can I then think the fiery steed will stray
 At my weak call o'er some untravell'd way,
 Take me to tracks beyond all former view,
 And bear me safely here with *something new*?

M

No—

No—such proud hopes can ne'er my breast invade,
 I, a mere novice in the tuneful trade,
 Just come to speak of what a thousand more,
 In nobler lays, have told you long before ;
 To speak indeed of what must ever last—
 The dear remembrance of your kindness past—
 And though my voice is weak, my numbers rude,
 Yet as they spring from genuine gratitude,
 The incense kindled by that sacred flame
 The heart must love, the judgment scorn to blame ;
 Nay, such an off'ring more delighted chuse
 Than sweetest warblings of the raptur'd muse.
 Take then the language of a heart sincere,
 Take the fond tribute of this grateful tear.
 And though by fortune doom'd to distant scenes,
 To that lov'd spot still anxious mem'ry leans,
 Where first your favour cheer'd my feeble pow'r,
 Nurtur'd the bud, and propt the rising flow'r.
 Nor has my tongue, through all its mimic part,
 Through all the treasures of poetic art—
 Nor has my tongue one glowing passage try'd,
 Though SHAKSPEARE's self the wond'rous strain supply'd,
 That lent a fervour to my thrilling breast
 Warm as the sense your kindness has imprest.

PROLOGUE
TO THE DIVERTISEMENT,
A MUSICAL PASTICCIO.

PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

SPOKEN BY MR. FARREN.

THAT critics may not carp, nor malice grumble,
We fairly own this drama is a jumble;
A thing indeed scarce worthy hostile spleen,
Of various colours, a mere patch-work scene;
Yet as you oft have view'd with partial eye,
If rumour errs not, ev'ry single die,
Sure we may hope that blameless they will pass,
Now we present them mingled in a mass.
Our friends above there, many a merry time,
Have rapt'rous seen the changeful pantomime;
Ask we on what so eagerly they doat?
What but the hero of the motley coat.
E'en those below, of fashion's glit'ring train,
Who fondly croud her ever-varying fane,
Think they this goddess of the transient hue
Yields always to her vot'ries *something new!*

M 2

Alas!

Alas ! she is but nature's servile ape,
 Works with her substance, and but courts her shape,
 And when she dares the great exemplar slight,
 Some crude distortion but offends the sight.

This for our piece to soften your decree—
 Now for your kindness on a diff'rent plea.
 Long has it been our pride to hold the stage
 The moral mirror of the passing age ;
 To shew the *form* and *pressure* of the time,
 And character reflect of ev'ry clime :
 What if we deviate from the gen'ral plan,
 And quit, for once, the species for the man :
 Our mimic brothers of the brush, we find,
 Draw individuals rather than the kind ;
 Like them, let us the scenic canvas spread,
 Not for whole man, but any single head.
 To night a vocal painter enters here,
 Tend'ring his harmless sketches to the ear,
 Nor fears your candour will his efforts blame,
 Since not burlesque, but portrait, is his aim.

PROLOGUE

TO MODERN BREAKFAST,

A FARCE BY MR. SIDDONS, JUNIOR.

SPOKEN BY MRS. STEPHEN KEMBLE.

CRITICS, for once your dread decrees suspend,
 And strive to prove, hard task, a poet's friend ;
 The timid, trembling, inexperience'd wight
 Who for your favour humbly sues to-night,
 Can urge one plea that should disarm your spleen,
 For know, dread censors, he is scarce *fifteen*.
 The awful sages of the law, we find,
 Are always to the youthful culprits kind,
 And rather charge the first offences still
 On erring judgment, than corrupted will.
 With pity then, behold this early crime,
 Nor doom him dead e'er yet he reach his prime,
 But nobly leave him to reforming time.

}

Ladies, you're bound to judge by gentle laws,
 And own the fault is sanction'd by the cause :
 'Tis love, alas ! has led the stripling wrong—
 Charm'd by the muse and her enchanting song.
 The muse, with all her sex's magic sway,
 Too oft has drawn the youthful heart astray.

Ah !

Ah ! since so soon allur'd by female wiles,
 Here should his hopes be cheer'd by female smiles ;
 Oh ! then ye fair, your soft protection give,
 And our young bard shall spite of critics live.

Forgive him beaux, if he, like other fools,
 Vulgar, should swerve from fashion's nicer rules,
 Sporting no tassel'd knee, no swoln cravat,
 No booted ancle, and no chimney hat ;
 Yet in the muse he loves a *charming jade*,
 And *gallantry's* at least a modish trade.

But if the dragons, breathing hostile flame,
 Who watch th' Hesperian fruit of letter'd fame,
 Deny'd themselves the tempting food to taste,
 Would envious keep him from the rich repast ;
 If females too his tender plea should slight,
 Or, harder still, with critics foes unite,
 Because, neglecting each terrestrial fair,
 He madly wooes a beauty of the air ;
 If beaux should rashly hiss, ere yet they know
 Whether his cape's too high, or skirt too low ;
 Whether in gross expansion glares his face,
 Or well-bred whiskers spread a grisly grace,
 And scarce allow th' imprison'd nose a place ;
 Let gen'rous sympathy his cause defend—
 Th' attempt was kindly made to serve a friend :

Sure

Sure then a British audience will assign
 On sprig of bays to bloom on friendship's shrine.
 So may that sprig, plac'd by your partial care,
 Not with'ring drop, but rise and flourish there,
 'Till spreading strong, with life's advancing morn,
 The moral stage it shelter and adorn.
 Then while the muse imparts her plastic aid,
 And virtue consecrates the votive shade,
 Th' exulting bard shall own with grateful pride,
 Your fost'ring zeal the genial force supply'd.

PROLOGUE

TO MR. MERRY'S TRAGEDY OF LORENZO.

SPOKEN BY MR. HOLMAN.

'Tis held that pleasure rules this laughing age,
And mirth has so monopoliz'd the stage,
That poor Melpomene in vain may swell,
With rending woes, and direful stories tell :
No drops of kindred grief resistless start,
No sob responsive soothes her bursting heart ;
Her sportive sister reigns despotic here,
And if ye weep, joy claims th' extatic tear.
If so, our bard, alas ! in luckless hour
Has rashly try'd the scene's pathetic pow'r.
Critics perchance will scowl with fierce disdain,
Or giddy fashion mock the tender strain.

But sure 'tis slander—BRITONS STILL CAN FEEL,
Still foster genius with impartial zeal,
Whether it frolic with the jocund muse,
Or nobler strains of sacred sorrow chuse.
Let kindling genius spread its magic beam,
Or on the sprightly or the mournful theme,

And

And British sympathy shall still supply
Mirth's loudest roar, or pity's tend'rest sigh.

Whether one spark of this transcendent fire
Has touch'd our timid poet's trembling lyre ;
Whether he faintly gleam with borrow'd rays,
Or burst effulgent forth with native blaze,
From your august award will soon appear,
Which he, alas ! awaits with boding fear.—
Yet sure no harsh decree he need presage
From taunting fashion, or from critic rage ;
For since his cause by Englishmen is try'd,
The sentence must incline to mercy's side.

And if the drooping minstrel of to-night
Has struck the melancholy chords aright,
If, while he fondly pours the plaintive line,
He aims to sadden only to refine ;
If true to nature, nature must prevail,
Each heart will soften at the melting tale,
And own, as once the sage* enthusiast sung,
Whose moral harp the raptur'd muses strung,
“ The broadest *mirth* unfeeling folly wears
“ Less pleasing far than virtue's *very tears*.”

* POPE.

OCCASIONAL ADDRESS,
SPOKEN BY MR. STEPHEN KEMBLE,
ON OPENING A PROVINCIAL THEATRE.

CUSTOM, a potentate whose specious sway
Mankind so oft implicitly obey,
Proud in pretension of prescriptive right,
Expects perhaps a prologue here to-night.
But though we scorn to yield with slavish awe
A blind respect to that old tyrant's law,
Yet for the kind protection you impart,
The grateful tribute rushes from the heart.

The scenic muse, unlike her sister train,
Too long has struggled with a galling chain,
Forc'd a precarious residence to seek,
Or think by license, and by patent speak :
What though the potent terror of her stage
Can torpid conscience rouse to scorpion rage —
E'en those who slight religion's voice divine,
Have wept repentant at the muse's shrine,
While the mild grace of her pathetic scene,
Her soften'd accents, and her gentler mien,
The selfish passions can at once disarm
By the sweet force of pity's melting charm.

What

What though with equal pow'r her comic strain
 The sacred cause of virtue still maintain,
 While her arch satire, sportive and yet warm,
 Can headstrong folly with a laugh reform ;
 Yet least protected is she doom'd to pine,
 Though the first muse of all the tuneful nine ;
 Though, whereso'er the bless'd enthusiast stray,
 A moral radiance brightens all the way.
 'Tis yours to mitigate a lot severe ;
 'Tis yours the drooping, wand'ring nymph to cheer ;
 Oh ! may she find a lasting shelter here. }
 Then while we pour her various treasures forth,
 And fondly strive to vindicate her worth,
 If all unequal to the bold design
 Where her own SHAKSPEARE's matchless glories shine,
 Oh ! if we rudely sweep his wond'rous lyre,
 May the 'rapt strain at least your minds inspire ;
 Till fancy, kindling at his magic flame,
 Impart to " airy nothing" *place and name* ;
 And too possess'd to stoop at vulgar faults,
 " Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts *."

* Prologue to Henry the Fifth.

PROLOGUE

TO THE COMEDY OF WILD OATS.

SPOKEN BY MR. HARLEY.

WHAT can we now invite you to partake,
 When realms have been exhausted for your sake,
 And ample nature travers'd o'er and o'er,
 Till all her beaten haunts can yield no more?
 From climes where Phœbus pours his brightest ray
 To where scarce faintly dawns the twilight day,
 The dauntless bards have urg'd their vent'rous aim,
 To greet you still with fresh dramatic game.
 One noble hunter of the Thespian train
 Rush'd from his Avon's side o'er earth's domain,
 And brought with happy magic, more than toil,
 The motley tribe of ev'ry varying soil ;
 While his quick eye so widely could explore,
 That time himself shall scarce discover more.
 Nay, in the track of his sublime career,
 We pass the bounds of nature's humble sphere,
 And zealous tender all our search has found
 Through radiant wilds of fancy's fairy ground.

Once

Once more the arduous chace we dare renew,
 And fondly hope we've started something new.
 Our hero, for so far we may discover,
 Is 'a young actor, and of course a lover ;
 But what perchance will raise no slight surprize,
 Though us'd to *various shapes* above *disguise*,
 Fictitious language of a borrow'd part
 Sports from his tongue indeed, but not his heart ;
 For nature's warm and absolute controul
 Guides ev'ry impulse of his gen'rous soul.
 Sure such a part your favour must engage,
 And though a stranger on the mimic stage,
 Yet may the scenic band with honest pride,
 Howe'er by formal prejudice decry'd,
 Boast as fair patterns of domestic worth
 As that our present drama pictures forth.

Let then the bard who vindicates our cause
 Receive the sanction of your warm applause ;
 So may we prove, in spite of prudish spleen,
 Actors can feel beyond the passing scene,
 And, long too harshly deem'd a thoughtless kind,
 Live to the friendly model he design'd.

PROLOGUE

TO THE COMEDY OF A WORLD IN A VILLAGE.

SPOKEN BY MR. HOLMAN.

IN these dread times, when war's unsated rage
 Crouds with disasters life's eventful stage,
 When the fell trumpet and embattled ire
 Drown the soft warblings of the slighted lyre,
 The muses' lonely haunts no more display
 Among their with'ring blooms the poet's bay ;
 The partial soil the laurel only rears,
 For martial wreaths that vegetate *in tears*.

At such a time, superfluous seems the art
 To melt with fabled woes the sadden'd heart ;
 The sorrowing muses need themselves relief,
 And fancy droops in sympathetic grief.
 The tragic maid indeed may sooth her care,
 And future scenes from passing ills prepare ;
 But for the laughing nymph, alas ! can she
 At ease presume with her untimely glee !
 Is there a place amidst a world's alarms
 In safety still to heed her frolic charms ?

Yes—

Yes—in the shades of Britain's happy isle
 Still may the comic muse securely smile ;
 Still with her tuneful sisters shelter here,
 Nor savage anarchy's vain menace fear.

Here no dire ruffians, dead to gen'rous joy,
 All that endears and brightens life destroy ;
 Or, drench'd in blood, with impious rage combine,
 Trampling o'er thrones, to crush the hallow'd shrine.
 No despot here exacts a slavish awe,
 The casual impulse of his passion's law.

Here, on a rock, secure amid the storm,
 Dwells Liberty, in fair monarchic form,
 Around her fane, with venerable grace,
 Three matchless columns fortify the place:
 Enthron'd within, pre-eminently great,
 Sits awful Justice in majestic state,
 Of equal laws the animating soul,
 And station'd highest, to survey the whole :
 Her sword by mercy check'd, as urg'd by might,
 Her crown, the sanction of a people's right.

OCCASIONAL ADDRESS

FOR THE OPENING OF COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE.

THINK not 'tis merely now our poor design
 To greet you with the cold and labour'd line,
 Trick'd out with all the muse's flow'ry aid,
 That custom tenders in a vain parade:
 No—prouder, we such formal dulness spurn,
 And hail with genuine joy your glad return.
 Absence can calm the vengeance of a foe,
 And makes e'en friends with livelier transports glow.
 Yet higher still must be the bliss, when we
 Not only friends, but lib'ral patrons see.
 Nor let some cynic hint, with churlish sneer,
 That int'rest prompts the wish to meet you here:
 For grant that hope may spread its cheering ray
 O'er the fair scenes of many a future day,
 Our cordial greetings no mean care supplies,
 But grateful mem'ry bids that hope arise.
 And let your candour deem us not too vain,
 If while our feelings pour an artless strain,
 We dare refer you to the scene around,
 For proof where grateful mem'ry may be found.

Yet

Yet though we thus may emulative try
 With grace of ornament to lure the eye,
 Ne'er may we court you at the dear expence
 Of truth and nature, character and sense;
 But chiefly heed the Drama's glorious end—
 Mankind to cheer, to soften, and to mend.

Then while with duteous rev'rence we explore
 Of scenic worth th' unperishable lore,
 Each kindred spirit who may pant to trace
 The great fore-fathers of the tuneful race
 (Poetic planets that through ev'ry age
 Shall spread unfading splendour o'er the stage),
 Each fond enthusiast of congenial flame,
 According talents, and one common aim,
 Rapt with a zeal from potent nature caught
 To "body forth" the poet's airy thought,
 Shall find a sure, a warm protection here,
 To raise the moral laugh or chast'ning tear.

So, daring hope! new SHAKSPEARES may arise,
 So may new GARRICKS fix your wond'ring eyes,
 And by the spells of their united art,
 Still charm the passions—to refine the heart.

IMITATIONS, &c.

ODE TO THE NEW YEAR, 1787.

AN IMITATION.

Now reader, on the lofty back,
Great PETER, bard sublime, is vaulting,
Of that renown'd Pindaric hack
His master never yet found halting.

But where the devil shall I drive,
Or what poetic ground explore,
Where oft the hungry tuneful hive
Have not been buzzing long before ?
Yet something must be done, dear gossip muse,
Hast then no friend to praise, no foe abuse ?
Come, bid thy lyre its sweetest notes prepare,
Sweet as if strung by master Phoebus' hair.
Though why such chords should give more dulcet tone,
To tell, exceeds my wit I fairly own.
An Ode must be produc'd I swear,
— And lo ! the time is nigh,
For else the world will strait declare
That PETER's pump is dry.

Now

Now then fair muse display thy tuneful matter,

'Tis the new year invites thy lofty lay,

Dost thou not hear the din of lyric clatter,

That wakes all Grub-street 'gainst this awful day?

With angry voice methinks I hear thee cry,

" My lyre on such a theme shall sound for no man,

" A novel thought the NINE could ne'er supply

" Upon a theme so very dull and common."

Think not, proud minx, thy lays should be confin'd

To sing the wonders of the coming year,

Bring something forth, and faith I shall not mind,

However wild the varying verse may veer.

Then, Madam, set aside all needless fury,

Sing but of something, and no matter what—

A Nabob's *truth*, the *chastity* of Drury,

A *modest* Irishman and *simple* Scot.

" Well, since the muse may rear aloft her wing

" Without constraint, her theme shall be THE KING."

—Hold, hold, dear damsel, prithee stay

Till mighty GEORGE's natal day.

Then will I eager seize the happy time,

And pour forth copious floods of loyal rhyme ;

Then sing with *wonted* zeal my Monarch's praise,
The pride and glory of his PETER's lays.

"The PRINCE"—Ah! there unlucky dame,
Thou'rt quite forestall'd by partial fame,
And not one virtue could thy strains resound
But she has sung th' admiring world around.

"Then strike to *private worth* the string,
"St. AUBYN and his sisters sing,
"And say how pleas'd the man of rhyme
"Beneath their roof enjoy'd his easy time."
Dear muse, I gladly would obey,
And praise them in my noblest lay,
But know their modesty is such,
'Twould deem the faintest praise too much,
And shame would 'whelm the charming throng
On hearing the oppressive song;
Therefore one virtue to respect
I must a hundred more neglect.

"To PAINTERS"—No, e'en let them rest
Snug in their academic nest:

For

For OPIE's business now is done ;
That wond'rous boy has fix'd his name
High on the rolls of graphic fame ;
I therefore drop my lyric fun.

" Strange, PETER, since you thwart me thus,
" And all my themes refuse,
" E'en make an Ode without more fuss,
" And never mind a muse."

Then since the proud Parnassian jade
Denies her tuneful aid,
I'll beat my brains
For better strains,
And thus in numbers strong and sweet
Great PETER shall the new year greet.

ODE.

Well, squire NEW YEAR, I hail thy dismal birth,
Whelp'd when bluff Winter rules the gloomy earth,
Shap'd in a most forbidding form,
With snowy garb and breath of storm,
Art thou a thing to wake the poet's lyre,
Who driv'st him pinch'd and shiv'ring to a fire?

Glad

Glad to escape from thy fell stripe,
And potent paw's tremendous gripe!

Pray what dost thou intend
Before thy twelve-month life shall end?—
Must lightnings dart to shake our souls with fear,
Or angry thunders roll—to spoil *small beer*?
Shall plague extend her baleful hand,
Or famine seize the blasted land?

What odd, but shocking strife,
Hast thou decreed for human life?
Must war set blowing all her fires,
Because one man a bit of dirt desires;
Or slaughter'd millions load the plain,
That nabobs may augment their gain?
And when about the mournful world
All sorts of horrors thou hast hurl'd,
For all these mighty pretty pranks
Thou wilt, perhaps, expect our thanks.

What wonders shall adorn thy bright career,
What lofty bards or *learned pigs* appear,

The

The marv'ling croud to fill with wild surprize ?
 Shall Lady MARY DUNCAN cease to doat
 On the soft strains of an Italian throat,
 Or QUEENSB'RY'S Duke grow gen'rous, good and wise ?

Think not, bluff Sir, thy work is done ;
 If plenty bless the smiling land,
 Or science unknown stores expand,
 Thou also must produce some *fun*,
 And yield for ev'ry day fresh *tittle-tattle*.
 Then let thy fancy some vagaries breed,
 The giddy throng's fantastic wish to feed ;
 Let some new SIDDONS teach them *how to cry*,
 Knock out some bruiser's only eye,
 And future *Jews* and *Humphreys*' bring to battle.

A thousand hints for thy invention
 The bard wants leisure now to mention,
 But thou must stir thy stumps about,
 And always keep a sharp look out.
 That is, squire Year, if thou'rt inclin'd
 To leave a decent name behind.—

Thou see'st I am no flat'ring wight ;
 I do not, like the bards of yore,
 Thy wond'rous virtues praise before
 Old Father Time has push'd thee into light.

— For

For all the counsel of my friendly lay,
 To thy kind poet due attention pay ;
 My modest wish to trifling things extends :

I only ask for vig'rous health,

Wide spreading fame and tides of wealth,

Besides a group of firm and witty friends.

If it thee please

To grant me these,

Then, like the world's ungrateful pack,

I'll not abuse thee when thou'st turn'd thy back ;

But, at thy death

My lyric breath,

Of thy successor shall implore the same,

And hand him up, like thee, to endless fame.

ODE

TO MATTHEW BRAMBLE, ESQ.

ON HIS EPISTLES TO ACTORS.

AN IMITATION.

MATTHEW, thou'st seen, no doubt, a little print,
 Caught from some pleasant fabling bard of old;
 For that same scraping thou may'st take a hint,
 A hint to thee more precious e'en than gold.
 The artist has pourtray'd a wanton *bear*,
 In search of honey tumbling down a hive,
 From whence the buzzing tenants vengeful drive,
 To make him loudly curse his sav'ry fare.
 Some settle on his eyes,
 Some on his nose,
 Resolv'd that no excuses shall avail—
 One to his ear with furious anger flies;
 With equal rage another goes,
 And darts its venom in his burning tail.
 Now though a bear I do not think thee, BRAMBLE,
 For, faith, too well I like thee to abuse thee;
 I fain would save thee from as dread a scramble,
 And from a swarm who worse than bees would use thee.

In short, good friend, thy merry Odes,
That lash so well the acting tribe,
Have conjur'd such a stir,
That ev'ry dame and sir
Who strut upon the stage,
Repeat thy name with rage,
And, swoln like bloated toads,
Would gladly find thee out with any toil or bribe.

Then take this hint, and still remain *perdue*,
For should they know thee, think what thou might'st rue.
Perchance behind the scenes thou lik'st to stroll,
To learn if aught dramatic new is—
To chat with easy-manner'd LEWIS,
Or laugh with little QUICK, the sportive droll,
Or grave converse with decent HULL,
With store of worth, and knowledge in his skull,
Till WILD, decorous, quits the page
To *prompt* for *silence* off the stage.
Or thro' stage doors to pop thy critic mien,
Smit by the mighty pleasure *to be seen*.
Or, caught by female charms, delight to trace
The sweet allurements of each beauteous face.
Once known, no more these scenes thou could'st enjoy,
For then a thousand dangers might annoy.

EDWIN,

EDWIN, the wond'rous master of grimace,

Resentful of thy pleasant jibe,

That rank'd him with the tippling tribe,
Might squirt the *recent dram* into thy face.

WEBB, like *Bonduca*, with her pond'rous paw,

Might shake thy frame, and leave thee scarce a rag on ;
Another, spitting venom from her maw,

Rush on thee like a fell and hungry dragon.

The Jove theatric too might lightnings dart,
And stun thy senses with his thund'ring art.

Lamp-lighters and scene-shifters might assist,

Then would thy lyric life soon find its end,

Kick'd by each foot, and pummel'd by each fist,

Or whirl'd from heights whence canvas clouds descend.

JOHNSTONE so sprightly, BANNISTER so stout,

Might wish to save thee from the rabble rout :

And BILLINGTON, their fury to disarm,

Pour from her matchless throat the tuneful charm ;

Yet all her heav'nly accents flow in vain,

As to the Thracian crew sad ORPHEUS' strain.

Some witlings too against thee might arise :

REYNOLDS, the comic muse's playful pup,

With ready pen thy manners *dramatize*,

Or ANDREWS, powder-monger, blow thee up.

At *Drury's* scenes, indeed, there's no such fear,
 For there no stranger's footstep dares presume ;
 The very actors' scarcely venture near—
 No idle mirth disturbs the cloister'd gloom.

Then, *MATT*, pursue thy gay instructive task,
 And from the shade mysterious still
 Pour forth thy genuine Heliconian rill,
 Nor till thy work is finish'd drop the mask.

ODE
ON THE DEATH OF MR. WARTON.
AN IMITATION*.

AH ! whence arose that thrilling sound,
That seem'd THE MUSE herself to wound,
That gliding swiftly thro' the vale,
Mingles its echoes with the gale,
Then mounts along the steepy hill,
Where slow descends the lucid rill,
And flutt'ring o'er the dizzy height,
Arrests THE EAGLE in his flight.

Ah ! me, more dismal is the note
Than is THE RAVEN's croaking throat,
That rudely rends the troubled air,
And makes the PLUMY MINSTRELS stare,
Or stop the voice or flag the wing,
While vivid smiles the *purple spring*.

* The judicious reader will perceive, that the Imitation extends also to manner of printing, that none of the *more beautiful* passages may be negligently overlooked. Nor will it escape the discerning critic, that the great merit of this kind of poetry is to pursue one idea as far as it can be extended. As for instance, SOUND, upon the present occasion.

I heard

I heard the sound, as near the stream
I softly stole in rapt'rous dream,
And ponder'd on the woes that wait
This fev'rish, feeble, fainting fate.

I heard the sound ere yet THE DAWN
Had glimmer'd o'er the *dewy lawn*,
When day's PROUD RULER faintly spread
Near the high mountain's *sapphire head*,
And when he gain'd NOON's fervid height,
And pour'd upon the aching sight
In one broad wide effulgent stream,
While *thirsty* NATURE shun'd his beam ;
And when he sought the *billowy deep*,
Leaving the EVENING world to sleep,
The *fatal sound* would still be near,
To jar upon my *tender ear*.
I heard the sound at MIDNIGHT hour,
While all around the *silv'ry show'r*
Fell from the wand'ring *orb of* NIGHT,
And touch'd my breast with SAD DELIGHT.

I heard the sound when LAURA's eyes
Had whelm'd my soul in fond surprize ;

When

[III]

When to my view those *mounts of snow*
 That in her od'rous bosom *glow*,
 Her melting hand, her *pretty feet*,
 Her lips where rival rubies meet,
 Her teeth that bid the IV'RY sigh,
 And envious mourn its SAFFRON.DIE ;
 When all her beauty's glorious blaze
 Wrapt my wild senses in amaze.

Ah ! me, THE SOUND, I know it well,
 It sadly tolls A POET's knell,
 It speaks A BARD's *extinguish'd flame*,
 And is the *sigh of sorrowing FAME*.
 And must A POET's tuneful breath
 Fleet with the vulgar heaps of death ?
 And does not NATURE, too, expire,
 When TIME has quench'd THE MUSE's fire ?
 Ah ! no, in earlier days THE BARD
 Has fall'n beneath the sad award ;
 And nature, dead to gen'rous shame,
 Has still remain'd the VERY SAME.

What can escape thy rage, oh ! TIME ?
 THE ROSE, the garden's *princely prime*,

That

That round its sweets so freely throws,
 And gives such transports to THE NOSE;
 That too must yield its fragrant soul,
 And hasten to the awful goal:
 THE CATERPILLAR, monster, fell,
 Steals slyly to its blossom'd cell,
 And there invades the balmy gem,
 Or sometimes preys upon the stem;
 And fearless of THE MUSE's snub,
 Remorseless triumphs o'er the martyr'd shrub.

But, oh! what lofty bard shall dare
 Assume THE LAUREAT's radiant chair?
 Ha!—who can boast the *burning quill*
 To fix the soul of RAPTURE still,
 Pluck'd in th' ethereal tracks above,
 From the dread soaring bird of JOVE,
 Slit by old VULCAN's *temper'd blade*,
 By sov'reign JOVE's OWN CUTLER MADE;
 Dipp'd in the ink of *vermeil die*
 Of PHCEBUS, laureat of the sky.
 Hah!—who among the lyric throng,
 But DELLA CRUSCA, *soul of song*—
 On him the VERDANT CROWN should shine,
 And proudly round his tuneful temples twine;
 Then would each *conscious leaf* exulting glow—
 FOR IS NOT DELLA CRUSCA PHCEBUS' SELF BELOW?

FRAGMENT.

AN IMITATION.

ARTISTS, my cousin PETER, sportive wight,
 No longer tunes on *paint* the lyric strings,
 But higher wings his bold ambitious flight,
 To soar o'er *palaces* and pounce on *kings*.

Must then your annual deeds unsung remain,
 Because his muse at loftier themes will jump ?
 Rather than so, I'll cudgel my dull brain,
 Or from his ink-horn steal some cast-off stump.

Yet, who shall dare to touch his pen, ah ! no ;
 'Tis he himself can manage it alone ;
 'Twould only prove to me ULYSSES' bow—
 I'll e'en content myself to try my own ;

Not from the eagle's mighty pinion caught,
 As proudly rising to salute the sun,
 But from MINERVA's bird of solemn thought,
 Brush'd down perchance amid some loving fun.

Q

Th'

Th' attempt I own is hazardous and rash,
 And what the surly critic must cry *fi*e on ;
 With satire's horse-whip he'll my shoulders thrash,
 And say, " an ass pursues the Lybian lion."

But yet indeed the business soon were done,
 Should nought but merit wake the muse's lay ;
 And sure 'twere wrong to waste Pindaric fun
 On works that only live a little day.

The Samian's sage's creed, I fear is vain—
 The spirit does not here renew its birth ;
 Below APELLES' soul can ne'er remain,
 At least it wears no painting shape on earth.

Now, gossip muse, thy rambling nonsense stop,
 The voice of gentle candour let us hear ;
 Come, to the graphic mansion let us hop,
 And view the fruits of this prolific year.

PAINTERS, when late the awful morning came
 That gave your labours to the gaping town,
 Of curiosity I felt the flame,
 Away I sprang, and clap'd my shilling down.

Ah!

Ah ! shilling, bearing on thy splendid face
 The sacred head of Majesty so fine,
 Where laurel'd honours, with heroic grace,
 Record the triumphs of a soul divine.

Well, up the stairs my bardship nimbly trip'd,
 Swift as the whizzing arrow cuts the air,
 My eyes around the room as nimbly skip'd,
 And on each mighty work I marv'ling stare.

REYNOLDS, thy pencil fix'd my wand'ring view,
 Supreme in genius—worthy all thy fame ;
 Thy magic touch to taste and nature true,
 Secures for immortality a name.

Aye—here's the vig'rous son of am'rous JOVE,
 Fruit of sly transports with AMPHYTRION's wife,
 Whose cradled strength with twining monsters strove,
 And crush'd out, giant-like, the venom'd life.

Ah ! REYNOLDS, why should portrait thee confine,
 Whose stroke can epic force at once impart,
 Whose canvass with Homeric fire can shine,
 And blaze with all the true sublime of art ?

But now 'tis our poetic pleasure
 To change the measure—
 Oh ! for that pliant quill
 To turn at will,
 Light as the steed o'er fam'd New-market's plain,
 Or slow and solemn as the beasts that draw
 That stately character beheld with awe,
 The *city's annual king*, bedeck'd with fur and chain,
 When to Cheapside return'd, each staring sinner
 Envies the jaded Lord his hard-earn'd dinner.

In vain I strive a nearer view to gain—
 To see such wonders crowds resistless strain—
 A charming struggle 'twixt the old and young,
 Like insects swarming o'er the dabs of dung.

What's here?—a picture of Miss FARREN—
 LAWRENCE thou'rt not in genius barren,
 Only too fond of gaudy hues ;
 I wish thou'dst take with TASTE a walk,
 And meddle less with *indigo* and *chalk*—
 I hate thy whites, thy purples, and thy blues.
 But why is FARREN in this wintry gear?
 The flow'rs around proclaim a smiling year—

Why

Why all that fur about her hand and cloak?
 Since nothing here denotes a season rough—
 Or does the artist mean a subtle joke,
 And hint the damsel highly rates her *muff*.

Now let us, gentle muse, advance,
 To view the work of Mr. DANCE—
 Upon my word, a landscape chaste ;
 And touch'd with spirit, truth and taste ;
 But what is best, if right we understand,
 Most of the scene is Mr. DANCE's land.
 Rhymers and daubers never should be rich—
 Wealth gives them all for indolence an itch :
 'Twas long ere DANCE to paint return'd ;
 Some said his former art he spurn'd,
 Which made the world dame FORTUNE curse,
 Who chang'd his charming pencil to a purse.

Reader, full well we know another*,
 In genius as in blood his brother,

* Mr. G. DANCE has proceeded very far in an admirable series of portraits of all who are distinguished in the present time, whether by genius or by accident. They are to be properly classed, and *merit* of course will be separated from mere *notoriety*.

Whose

Whose fame o'er graphic regions spreads
For *taking heads* ;

Not, mind me, in the *guillotining* fashion ;
And though some heads from folly caught
Seem'd ne'er encumber'd with a thought,
His skill invests them all with cogitation.

But now we'll hasten from the DANCES
To note the labours of Sir FRANCIS* :
A morning scene—the sun just come abroad—
I fear the artist did not look
Merely on nature's splendid book,
But caught a hint or two from master CLAUDE.

A shrewd observer oft may find
A painter's secret turn of mind ;
And whether he's a Christian or a Jew,
This is a matter known to few ;
That BOURGEOIS is devout, we sure may say ;
Mark how the pious heifer rears her head
To where the orient splendours fiercely spread,
And pays her homage to the God of day.

* Sir FRANCIS BOURGEOIS.

Here STUBBS, thy labours are conspicuous seen,

Where *stony bulls* contend, and *nags of bronze*,

That are of such materials form'd I ween,

As *hearts* and *fronts* of academic *dons*.

Yet STUBBS, thy worth I freely own,

But landscape-efforts let alone ;

Hard are thy meadows, and thy trees are wool ;

Thy men are *rather* stiff and *cool* :

On these, friend STUBBS,

Beware of critic-snubs ;

Give *landscape* up without remorse,

And stick to *horse*—

There all must own thy pencil well is,

And of Newmarket christen thee th' APELLES.

Near what old mould'ring castle's story'd scite

Has FARINGTON been following modest nature,

Whose simple charms to him can yield delight,

Proving to modern taste an arrant traitor ?

Ay—here we have it—*Conway's* ancient pile

Rears its majestic graces o'er the strand ;

WILSON * might look with an approving smile,

And think the work a credit to his hand.

* Mr. FARINGTON studied under the celebrated landscape-painter
WILSON.

Lord ! what a host of daubs with crimson reeking,
That seem imported from *Canton* and *Pekin* ;
Or if with local accent I should wanton,
That seem imported from *Pekin* and *Canton*.

Ah ! would ~~such~~ artists raise a pot'ry fame,
WEDGWOOD would wail with envy and affright ;
On pots and pipkins should their genius flame,
And carry cook'ry to its proudest height.

Could themes domestic gain their skill so fine,
How with their tints our utensils might glow ;
How might their labours in our bed-rooms shine,
And grace the vase that modest lurks below.

PROBATIONARY ODE

FOR THE LAUREATSHIP.

INTENDED FOR JOHN WILKES, ESQ.

OH! gracious Liege, at whom with rebel rage,
In heedless youth I aim'd the daring page,
Lo! a repentant patriot humbly bows,
His past misdeeds with sorrow views;
To thee he now prefers his loyal vows,
To thee he dedicates his wiser muse.

The strong resistless hand of death,
Which poets, princes, *patriots*, must obey,
At length has stop'd poor WARTON's tuneful breath,
His *soul* is now *expell'd* its *house of clay*.
WARTON is gone, dread Sire! but where
His *spirit* is a *candidate* for *place*,
What sage divine can tell—
Whether he owns a *king* in *hell*,
Or joins the *common-wealth* of *air*,
Whose *free-born* elements disdain controul,
Triumphant rush from pole to pole,
And sweep the boundless tracks of space.

R

Whether

Whether he's *seated* as a *peer* above,
 And puts on *robes* of *mystic light*,
 To figure in a real *House of Lords*,
 Or in decent clouds bedight,
 Attunes to *higher powers* the trembling chords,
 And sings in rapt'rous strains of heav'nly love,
 With the same hallow'd harp of old,
 When DAVID sacred myst'ries told,
 Who, scepter'd minstrel, could most sweetly sing,
Certes more sweet because he was a *king*—
 'Tis not for me to say, oh! mighty Sire,
 And vain *perhaps* of BISHOPS to inquire.

The awful day of Midsummer draws near,
 The day which fills my boding soul with fright;
 That awful day when I have cause to fear
 Loss of that place, the Chamberlainship hight,
 For WATKIN, knight of pond'rous head,
 On fam'd Plinlimmon born and *bred*,
 Now loaths his native cheese and leek,
 And ev'ry plain *domestic hash*,
 Anxious to fill with richer food his cheek,
 He, tamp'ring with the Liv'ry crowd,
 As vain, as senseless, and as loud,
 Would *finger*, 'stead of me, the *city cash*.

Lo!

Lo ! cursed scrutineers my peace assail,
 View my accounts with keen suspicious eyes,
 Truth will, in spite of all my skill, prevail,
 And dart her rays through ev'ry sly disguise:
 E'en GOG and MAGOG seem to threat my fall,
 And grin tremendous exile from Guildhall.

Pity my fate
 Then, GEORGE so great,
 To me the wreath assign:
 When once thy bard,
 I'll labour hard
 To make thy virtues shine.

Distrust not, Sire, my skill in rhyme,
 For, fir'd by youth's incautious prime,
 I once on *woman* pour'd the glowing lay—
 That muse shall celebrate thy natal day;
 And, as I know thy saintly soul
 Revolts at aught that may religion mock,
 Howe'er I check my darling vein,
 That loaths decorum's vulgar chain,
 Ne'er shall my strains thy feelings shock,
 But free from blasphemy the loyal verse shall roll.

I'll paint the blessings of thy glorious reign,
 The blooming hopes of all the royal hive;
 And now in turn shall faction's giddy train
 Feel the keen spirit of my *forty-five*.

Still more thy gracious will to suit,
 I'll court alliance with the Laird of BUTE—
 As greater men, fame says, did not disdain
 To hold a *secret treaty* with the Thane,
 When sunk in opposition's hopeless lot:
 I too will meekly court thy fav'rite Scot,
 And, to efface all thought of former days,
 Now sing his glorious peace in my repentant lays.

M'PHERSON and THE HOME, I fear,
 Will strive to captivate thy *tuneful* ear,
 And flat'ry's dulcet *bagpipe* fondly try:
 The first with lofty epic roar,
 Barren and rough as his own native shore,
 Will raise thy name like fabled FINGAL's, high.
 The other all his *sounding silence** bring,
 With fancy's *thistles* deck the verse
 Design'd his Sov'reign's merits to rehearse,
 And to a simple *Sawney* change a KING.

* "The river, rushing o'er its pebbly bed,
 "Imposes *silence* with a *stilly sound*."

DOUGLAS.

Let

Let me then, mighty monarch, be thy bard,
My pliant pen thy right divine shall guard ;
I'll write *North Britons* to defend thy crown,
The constitution's bulwarks scribble down.

Nor would I e'er dispute thy dread command,
Were it to leave poor reason in the lurch,
And go, oh ! pious Prince, *to church*,
Nay, e'en to visit *Caledonian* land.

. If the above Ode should appear too free in some passages, they should be referred to the character of the supposed author.

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ODE

FOR THE 14TH OF JULY, 1791,

THE DAY ON WHICH A DINNER WAS HELD AT THE CROWN AND
ANCHOR IN THE STRAND, BY CERTAIN ADMIRERS OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY HORRORS.

BEHOLD at length the glorious day,
When patriots panting for their prey,
Fierce on the constitution spring,
And lo ! in *modern* wisdom great,
Attempt to banish from the state
That strange old-fashion'd form A KING.

Fancy exulting sees the band
Marching intrepid through the Strand,
Regardless of the rabble hue ;
What tho' the mob incens'd, throw stones,
Striving to break their virtuous bones,
They patient eye the vulgar crew.

Nay, for that very mob so cruel,
They hold the light and bear the fuel,

To

To set the tott'ring state on flame ;
For them, not e'en expecting thanks,
They nobly strive to level ranks,
And quite erase each titled name.

Hark ! boldly starting from the crowd,
With wily face and accents loud,

A patriot thus the mob harangues—
“ Ye rash, unthinking many, we,
“ This day prepare to set ye free,
“ Free from dull order's legal fangs.

“ Have ye not heard that happy *France*

“ No longer is content to dance

“ To the sad music of her fetters?

“ Have ye not heard how there the mob

“ Have license now the state to rob,

“ And hang at will their richer betters?

“ Betters—mistaken word—we all

“ Are like each other, great and small—

“ Down with distinction's useless reign !

“ *France*, proud in theoretic rights,

“ Subordination nobly slights,

“ And o'er its monarch * throws a chain.

* This Ode was written before it was thought that the madness and cruelty of France would have brought the unfortunate LOUIS to the scaffold.

— “ Does

- " Does not the bright example fire—
 " And will not Englishmen aspire
 " To imitate the wond'rous plan;
 " Will they not rise in freedom's cause,
 " To crush authority and laws,
 " Those shackles on the rights of man?

 " Soon may ye share an equal fate,
 " New model soon our mould'ring state,
 " A *National Convention* form;
 " The palace to a prison turn,
 " The seats of justice quickly burn,
 " And o'er the empire spread the storm.

 " Let the great purpose of this day—
 " To hail the only proper sway,
 " The majesty the people boast—
 " Urge ye to aid such glorious ends,
 " Fly to the *gaols*—release our friends,
 " And havock then shall lead the host,"

In vain these truths the patriot sung,
 A rotten egg confounds his tongue,
 The crowd at once indignant shout;
 Too dull to mend, the slavish crew
 The patriot band with horror view,
 And put them soon to shameful rout.

Oh!

Oh! wild misguided multitude,
Why thus ungratefully and rude,
Treat ye the democratic elves?
Could ye their doctrines comprehend,
Before no rulers should ye bend,
But strait become all **KINGS YOURSELVES.**

O D E

TO PETER PINDAR, ESQ.

ON HIS ODES TO THOMAS PAINE.

PETER, 'tis said thy *coat is turn'd*,
Because thy muse indignant spurn'd
A theoretic elf,
Who ranc'rous urg'd his rebel pen
On false Utopian rights of men,
For mischief and for pelf.

But sure thou but appear'st in this
A zealous friend of social bliss,
And *England's* constitution ;
Averse to all th' insidious prate
Design'd to overturn the state,
In form of revolution.

Yet since thy muse so well can feel
The blessings of the public weal,
And dares its worth defend,
Why waspish would'st thou wound the man
Ordain'd to head the useful plan,
And ratify its end?

Too

Too long hast thou with giddy ire
 On gracious GEORGE engag'd thy lyre,
 With fables weak and vain ;
 Oh! let his mild and virtuous fame
 Thy wild unbridled satire tame,
 And lure the plausible strain.

Then nobly rise, facetious bard,
 Disloyal spleen at once discard,
 And gen'ral subjects chuse ;
 Fruitful in vice, this iron age
 May well employ thy biting rage,
 And justify the muse.

TO MISS BRUNTON,
ON THE REPORT OF HER INTENDED MARRIAGE WITH
MR. MERRY.

DEAR BRUNTON, how oft, by the hand of Report,
Have thy beauties been led to the church,
Where still the old gossip, in mischievous sport,
Has left thee as oft in the lurch.

At first the dame whisper'd, that HOLMAN the smart
Flew to thee from the bachelor's spleen ;
Yet it soon was confess'd he but *acted a part*,
And was merely the *spouse of the scene*.

Then MORTON, the airy, a wit of the town,
Was suppos'd thy affections to draw ;
But he was soon caught by a barrister's gown,
And would only be *wedded to law*.

Next REYNOLDS, a whimsical good-humour'd wight,
Was to open the conjugal page ;
But it quickly appear'd he lov'd only to write,
And to nothing would *fix but the stage*.

Last

Last MERRY, the tuneful, 'tis said is the man
Thy worth is to lead to the shrine ;
But the rogue is too fond of the libertine plan,
And of nymphs is devoted to nine.

Whilst thou, my dear BRUNTON, averse to the chain,
Thy husbands can'st lose without sorrow ;
For thou know'st that Report, in her good-natur'd vein,
Will provide thee another to-morrow.

SONNET.

SONNET.

TO MRS. SIDDONS,

ON THE BUST OF HER BROTHER AS CORIOLANUS.

AN IMITATION.

SIDDONS, egad, thou'st done for Mrs. DAMER—

Why, where the dev'l this talent could'st thou pick up?
The chizzling tribe already cry, “ we'll tame her—
“ A WOMAN dare our sculpture fame to kick up!”

How wilt thou sting with envy poor old NOLLIKENS ;

How wilt thou mortify the pride of HICKEY ;

How mar all BACON's schemes, and BANKS's frolickings :

Gadzooks ! I really fear they'll come and lick ye.

Who dost thou say it is—Oh ! CORIOLANUS—

Why, faith, the fellow shews a Roman bluster—
Madam, the nob does credit to thy *manus*,
And with the critics cannot but pass muster.

Nay, let those dogs set up their barkings hideous,

The muse shall crown thee as a second PHIDIAS.

SONNET.

SONNET.

IN THE MANNER OF A CELEBRATED SONNETTEER.

ALL on the margin of the main I stray,
 And when alone I hear no footsteps nigh,
 While solar beams amid the waters play—
 Save when fair LUNA rules the soften'd sky.

Sometimes I hear, along the echoing glade,
 Sad PHILOMEL her tuneful sorrows pour ;
 Save when *dumb* SILENCE has usurp'd the shade,
 For then I hear the melting woes no more.

'Tis thus, alas ! through all the paths of life,
 If *good* we miss, perchance 'tis *ill* we find—
 And oft the heart is torn by PASSION's strife,
 Save when INDIFF'RENCE sways the tranquil mind.

How glad then must we yield this mortal breath,
 When eagerly we pant for welcome death.

SONNET.

SUPPOSED BY THE SAME.

PITY the plainings of a sonneteer,
 Whose moping muse so woefully can weep ;
 Her drooping hopes with kind subscriptions cheer,
 So shall she still remain the friend of SLEEP.

Th' oblivious charm more potently to aid,
 His slumbrous chimings H— shall combine,
 And pompous periods from the Litchfield maid
 Complete an off'ring fit for SOMNUS' shrine.

The torpid strain, benumbing ev'ry sense,
 All opiates shall transcend of Warwick-lane,
 And our narcotic numbers sleep dispense
 When poppy and mandragora are vain :

E'en GOUT itself shall nodding read the lay,
 And softly sink in leaden ease away.

TO A LADY WHO HAD LOST AN EYE.

THOUGH poets so often their fancies employ
 In praise of a pair of fine eyes,
 There need not be two, for the mischievous boy
 With one can each bosom surprize.

Had fortune join'd us in the conjugal tie,
 With the Persian in faith I'd agree—
 The sun I'd adore—but, ah! thy radiant eye
 The orb of my worship should be.

Other mortals might order the night and the day
 By the ball that illumines the sky,
 But the days and the nights that my heart would obey,
 Should be govern'd alone by thine eye.

When that was in slumber conceal'd from my sight,
 I never could think it was day ;
 When that shone before me it could not be night,
 But my fancy would view the noon-ray.

When it rose in the morn, my obedience I'd pay,
 And ne'er my fond homage forget;
 But yet I should anxiously wish all the day
 For the time when 'twas going *to set*.

For then, soon as day's gaudy splendours retire,
I should rush to my heav'n—thy arms,
With all the devotion that love can inspire,
And kneel at the shrine of thy charms.

Ah! CHLOE, dear neglectful fair,
Why deaf to all my plaintive moan;
Yet let thy smiles a fopling share,
Who likes thee for thy dress alone?

I value not such outward charms,
But to thy native worth would fall,
And rather take thee to my arms,
Dear CHLOE, with no dress at all.

SENTIMENTAL LOVE.

WHAT is this sentimental love—
 This spell of the romantic mind,
 Whose flimsy texture fancy wove
 Too weak th' impassion'd heart to bind?

Does it from nature spring?—Ah! no;
 Nature the airy form denies—
 Is it by reason bred? If so,
 Why always hid from reason's eyes?

Is it a quick inspiring flame
 That animates with love the *heart*?
 No—its cold dictates strangely aim
 A mental fervour to impart.

Dull apathy, or frozen age,
 The phantom conjur'd first to view;
 The policy or envious rage
 Of those who ne'er true rapture knew.

Away! no more my thoughts detain,
 Illusive, visionary sprite!
 May love's warm stream through ev'ry vein
 Roll gay desire and fond delight.

And

And may the nymph whose sparkling eyes
For love and mutual bliss were sent,
Ne'er damp my ardours as they rise,
With the chill clouds of sentiment.

PHILANTHROPY.

How amiable is H - - 's muse,
How loth the erring heart to wring!
In satire she no force will use,
Nor e'en give epigram *a sting*.



